

# BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

---

LOUIS BERKHOF, B. D.



Bc

DS 112 .B4 1928

**Berkhof, Louis, 1873-1957.**

Biblical archaeology









# BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY



BY

L. BERKHOF, B. D.

Professor of Dogmatic Theology  
Calvin College and Theological Seminary  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Third Edition  
Revised

~~Bible House of Los Angeles~~

SMITTER BOOK COMPANY  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

DS  
112  
B4  
1928

Copyright, 1928,  
by  
Smutter Book Company

Printed in the United States of America



## PREFACE

The little book on Biblical Archaeology now offered to the public is a child of necessity. When the author began to teach this branch of study in the classroom, he cast about for a suitable textbook of sufficiently small compass, but failed to find one, the only book that would probably have served the purpose being out of print. Therefore he felt constrained to write a little treatise on the subject himself.

The product of his labors is not the fruit of original research, but is based on the larger works of George Adam Smith, C. F. Keil, J. Th. De Visser, J. Benzinger e. a. Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible too has been consulted frequently. Technical Hebrew and Greek terms were avoided as much as possible to make the work acceptable to general Bible classes as well as to theologians. Illustrations, however desirable in a book of this kind, were also left out, since they would make it too expensive. Moreover, for the sake of brevity all arguments on disputed points were omitted, which opens up a fine opportunity for the teacher.

It was thought best to make the table of contents as complete as possible, so that it might at the same time serve as an index to the book. If this little work may in some small measure be instrumental in promoting the knowledge of God's revelation, the author will be very grateful indeed.

L. BERKHOF.

Grand Rapids, Mich.,  
July 15, 1915.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
Literature .....	15
Introduction .....	17

---

## PART ONE: GEOGRAPHY

---

### I. PALESTINE

1. Name, Size and Geographical Position.....	21
2. Natural Features .....	22
a. The Four Longitudinal Sections.....	22
b. The Climate .....	23
c. The Natural Products and the Animals of Palestine .....	23
3. The Maritime Plain .....	26
a. Phoenicia .....	26
b. The Plain of Sharon.....	27
c. The Shephelah .....	27
d. The Plain of Philistia .....	28
4. The Central Mountain Range .....	28
a. The Mountains of Upper Galilee.....	28
b. The Mountains of Lower Galilee and the Plain of Esdraelon .....	29
c. The Mountains of Samaria.....	30
d. The Mountains of Judea.....	31
e. Jerusalem and Its Environs .....	32
5. The Eastern Mountain Range .....	33
a. The Hauran or Bashan .....	34

b. Mount Gilead .....	34
c. The Plains of Moab .....	35
6. The Jordan Valley and the Waters of Palestine...	36
a. The Arabah .....	36
b. The Sources of the Jordan and the Upper Jordan .....	36
c. The Sea of Galilee .....	37
d. The Lower Jordan .....	37
e. The Dead Sea .....	38
f. The Brooks of Palestine .....	38
7. The Political Divisions of the Holy Land .....	39
a. Among the Earliest Inhabitants .....	39
b. Among the Canaanitish Races.....	40
c. Among the Twelve Tribes .....	41
d. In the Time of Christ .....	42

## II. THE LANDS OF THE GENTILES

1. The Countries Adjoining Palestine .....	43
a. Syria .....	43
b. Moab and Ammon .....	44
c. Edom .....	45
2. Egypt .....	45
3. Arabia and the Sinaitic Peninsula .....	46
4. The Countries East of the Euphrates.....	47
a. Babylonia .....	47
b. Mesopotamia .....	47
c. Assyria .....	47
d. Elam .....	48
e. Media .....	48
f. Persia .....	48
5. The New Testament World .....	49
a. Asia Minor .....	49
b. Macedonia .....	50

c. Greece .....	50
d. Rome .....	50

---

## PART TWO: SECULAR LIFE

### I. DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

1. Food and Its Preparation .....	53
a. Different Kinds of Food .....	53
b. The Preparation of Food .....	54
c. Customs at Table .....	55
2. Clothing and Ornaments .....	56
a. Material for Clothing .....	56
b. Articles of Dress .....	56
c. Ornaments .....	58
3. Dwellings and Furniture .....	58
a. Different Kinds of Dwellings .....	58
b. Furniture .....	61
4. Villages, Towns and Cities .....	62
5. Marriage .....	63
a. The Character of Marriage .....	63
b. Wedding Ceremonies .....	64
c. The Position of Woman in Wedlock .....	65
d. Divorce .....	66
6. Parents and Children .....	67
a. The Blessing of Children .....	67
b. Different Classes of Names .....	68
c. The Education of Children .....	68
d. Privileges of the Firstborn .....	69
7. Servants .....	70
a. Foreign Bond-Servants .....	70
b. Hebrew Servants .....	70
8. Sickness, Death and Burial .....	71
a. Diseases .....	71
b. Burial .....	72

	c. Customs of Mourning .....	73
9.	Social Relations and Social Intercourse .....	74
	a. Social Relations .....	74
	b. Hospitality .....	74
	c. Family Feasts .....	75
	d. Courtesy .....	75
10.	Occupations .....	76
	a. Fishing and Hunting .....	76
	b. Cattle-Rearing .....	76
	c. Agriculture .....	78
	d. Wine and Olive Culture .....	80
	e. Industries .....	81
11.	Trade and Commerce .....	82
	a. Commercial Relations .....	82
	b. Measures .....	83
	c. Weights .....	84
	d. Money .....	85
12.	Sciences and Arts .....	86
	a. Character of the Sciences .....	86
	b. The Division of Time .....	88
	(1) The Day .....	88
	(2) The Week .....	89
	(3) The Month .....	89
	(4) The Year .....	89
	c. Writing and Writing Materials .....	90
	d. Architecture, Sculpture and Painting .....	92
	e. Poetry and Music .....	93

## II. CIVIL RELATIONS

1.	The People and Its Government.....	94
	a. The Natural Formation of Israel as a People	94
	b. The Institution of the Elders .....	95
	c. The Theocracy .....	96
	d. The Earthly King .....	96



e. Forms of Government after the Exile .....	98
2. The Administration of Justice .....	100
a. Origin, Character and Development of Hebrew Law .....	100
b. Judges and Courts of Law .....	101
c. Judicial Procedure .....	102
d. Criminal Law .....	104
(1) The Basic Principle of Criminal Law and Its Modifications .....	104
(2) Different Kinds of Transgressions....	104
(3) Punishments .....	106
e. Civil Law .....	107
(1) Personal Rights .....	107
(2) Rights of Marriage .....	108
(3) Rights of Property .....	109
(4) The Right of Inheritance .....	111
3. The Military System .....	111
a. The Army .....	111
b. Weapons .....	113
c. Method of Warfare .....	115

---

## PART THREE: RELIGIOUS LIFE

---

### I. BEFORE THE GIVING OF THE LAW

1. Ancient Religious Worship and Usages .....	121
2. Altars and Theophanies .....	123
3. The Sabbath .....	123
4. Idolatry .....	124

---

### II. AS DETERMINED BY THE LAW

A. General Character of Religious Life under the Law	
1. The Symbolical and Typical Element .....	125
2. The Emphasis Placed on Holiness .....	126

## B. Holy Places

1. The Tabernacle .....	126
a. Construction and Divisions .....	126
b. Furniture .....	128
c. Symbolico-Typical Significance .....	130
2. The Temple of Solomon .....	131
a. Construction and Divisions .....	131
b. Furniture .....	133
c. History of the Temple .....	134
3. The Temple of Zerubbabel .....	135
4. The Temple of Herod .....	135

## C. Holy Persons

1. The Levites .....	137
2. The Priests .....	139
3. The High Priest .....	141
a. His Requirements and Duties .....	141
b. His Distinctive Dress .....	142
c. The Symbolico-Typical Significance of the Priesthood .....	143
4. The Nethinim .....	143

## D. Holy Rites

1. The Sacrificial System in General .....	144
2. The Sacrificial Ritual and Its Meaning .....	145
a. The Selection of the Animal within the Limits Specified .....	145
b. The Laying on of Hands .....	145
c. The Killing of the Animal .....	145
d. The Manipulation of the Blood .....	146
e. The Burning of Certain Parts of the Animal on the Altar .....	146
f. The Disposition of the Remaining Pieces of the Sin-Offering .....	147
g. The Sacrificial Meal .....	147

3.	Sacrifices That Aim at Expiation .....	147
a.	The Sin-Offering .....	148
b.	The Trespass-Offering .....	148
4.	Sacrifices Expressive of Devotion to and of Com- munion with God .....	149
a.	The Burnt-Offering .....	149
b.	The Peace-Offering .....	150
c.	The Meat and Drink-Offerings .....	151
5.	Ceremonial Purifications .....	152
a.	The General Idea of Purification.....	152
b.	The Special Cases of Defilement .....	152
c.	The Method of Purification .....	153
6.	Vows .....	155
a.	Vows in General .....	155
b.	The <i>Cherem</i> or Ban .....	156
c.	The Nazarite's Vow .....	157
7.	Religious and Charitable Contributions .....	158
a.	The Firstborn .....	158
b.	The Firstlings .....	158
c.	The Firstfruits .....	158
d.	Tithes .....	158
e.	Atonement Money .....	159
8.	Sacramental and Liturgical Rites .....	159
a.	Prayer .....	159
b.	Sacred Song and Music .....	160
c.	Benediction .....	160

### E. Holy Seasons

1.	The Daily Service in the Sanctuary .....	161
2.	The Feasts in General.....	161
3.	The Sabbatic Cycle.....	162
a.	The Weekly Sabbath.....	162
b.	The Feast of the New Moon and the Feast of Trumpets .....	163
c.	The Sabbatic Year .....	164

- d. The Year of Jubilee.....164
- 4. The Three Great Feasts.....165
  - a. Their General Character.....165
  - b. Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread..165
  - c. Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks.....167
  - d. The Feast of Tabernacles and Its Octave....168
- 5. The Great Day of Atonement.....170

#### F. Deflection among Israel

- 1. Image Worship .....172
  - 2. Worship on High Places.....174
  - 3. Idolatry .....174
  - 4. Magical Arts, Divination, etc. ....177
- 

### III. IN THE POST-EXILIC CHURCH

- 1. The Synagogues .....178
- 2. The Scribes .....179
- 3. The Parties and Sects.....180
  - a. The Pharisees .....180
  - b. The Sadducees .....180
  - c. The Essenes .....181
- 4. The Proselytes .....181
- 5. The Feasts .....182
  - a. The Feast of Purim.....182
  - b. The Feast of the Dedication of the Temple...182

# The King's Library

## LITERATURE

Consulted in the Composition of this Book

---

- Baxter, *Sanctuary and Sacrifice*, London, 1895.  
Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, Leipzig, 1894.  
Bissell, *Biblical Antiquities*, Philadelphia, 1892.  
Brown, *The Tabernacle and its Priests and Services*, London, 1899.  
Davis, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Philadelphia, 1903.  
Edersheim, *The Temple and its Ministry*, New York.  
“ *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, New York.  
Ewald, *Die Alterthümer des Volkes Israel*, Göttingen, 1896.  
Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, New York, 1900.  
Fairweather, *The Background of the Gospels*, Edinburgh, 1908.  
Frohn Meyer, *Bijbelsche Aardrijkskunde*, Zwolle, 1907.  
Green, *The Hebrew Feasts*, New York, 1885.  
Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, New York.  
Hilprecht, Von, *Recent Research in Bible Lands*, Philadelphia, 1898.  
Hurlbut, *Bible Atlas*, Chicago.  
Keil, *Biblical Archaeology*, London, 1887.  
Lightfoot, *Works*, London, 1825.  
McCoun, *The Holy Land in Geography and History*, New York.  
Moorehead, *Studies in the Mosaic Institutions*, Dayton, 1904.  
Oesterly and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, New York, 1907.  
Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament*, New York, 1906.  
Price, *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, Chicago, 1902.

- Schouten, *De Tabernakel, God's Heiligdom bij Israel*, Rotterdam.
- Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, Leipzig, 1901–1909.
- Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, New York, 1902.
- Thompson, *The Land and the Book*, New York, 1882–1886.
- Tristram, *The Land of Moab*, New York, 1873.
- Visser, *Hebreeuwsche Archaeologie*, Utrecht.
- White, *Christ in the Tabernacle*, London, 1907.



## INTRODUCTION

The study of Biblical Archaeology is an important aid to the correct understanding of the Bible, since it gives a description of Bible lands and of the social, civil and religious customs of the people among whom God's revelation was given, especially of Israel, which was pre-eminently the people of God. This study differs from Biblical History in that it does not aim at a genetic description of the *ever changing facts* of history, but portrays the *more constant conditions* of life. If history be represented as the constantly flowing stream with its continual fluctuations, Archaeology may be likened to the river-bed that is but slightly changed in the course of centuries. But these changes, however small, make a purely systematic study of the subject-matter of Archaeology insufficient and necessitate a *historico-systematic* treatment.

This Study is naturally divided into three parts. In view of the fact that not the spiritual but the natural is first, and that a nation's life is inseparably connected with the soil on which it lives, it seems best to treat first of *the geography of those lands that have revelational significance*. Naturally a small treatise on Archaeology can only touch lightly on the lands of the Gentiles, while even its treatment of Palestine must be brief. But however compendious, it must contain some discussion of the size, the natural features, the products and the political divisions of the Holy Land. The second part is most appropriately devoted to *a study of the social and civil life of the nations that are specially prominent in the Word of God*. Their personal and family life, their social intercourse and their civil institutions should be considered. And finally, to cap the whole, the third part must contain *a description of the religious condition of those peoples in so far as it has any bearing on the revelation given*

*by God.* The sanctuaries of Israel, its priesthood and sacrifices, and its sacred seasons must form the object of study.

The one source in the study of Biblical Archaeology is naturally the Bible itself. This does not mean, however, that all the material contained in a work on this subject is taken directly from the Word of God; a great deal of it may be derived from so-called auxiliary sources. At the same time it does mean that whatever is so derived, must be selected according to a point of view determined by Scripture and, in general, merely serves to supplement the material found in the Bible. These auxiliary sources are:

**1. Other Writings, such as:**

- a. The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament, especially the Books of the Maccabees, the first of these being the most important.
- b. The Works of Josephus, which are of special value for the period between the Old and the New Testament.
- c. The Writings of Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, born about 25 B. C. The fanciful character of his work detracts greatly from its value.
- d. Some of the rabbinical Tracts contained in the Talmud that shed special light on Jewish practices in the time of Christ.

**2. Representative Monuments, Inscriptions and Coins, of which the most important are:**

- a. The triumphal Arch of Titus at Rome which contains representations of the temple furniture.
- b. The remains of buildings in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, such as the temple wall, the conduit conducting the water into the city, graves, etc.
- c. All sorts of religious objects, utensils and implements, etc., in daily use among the Jews of Jesus' days, that were brought to light by recent excavations in Palestine, as altars, pillars images, ovens, handmills, mortars, etc.
- d. Old Coins, especially of the time of the Maccabees.
- e. Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian Inscriptions.

# **PART ONE**



## **GEOGRAPHY**



## I. PALESTINE

---

### 1. NAME, SIZE AND GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION

Palestine, that land of hallowed associations, where Israel once dwelt and where our Saviour spent his earthly life, is variously designated in the Bible and in ancient literature. Its oldest appellative was *Canaan*, a name of uncertain origin, perhaps racial, derived from Canaan the son of Ham; but more likely geographical, meaning *lowland*, applied first of all to the low plain along the sea, and afterwards transferred to the whole district west of the Jordan. Similarly the name *Palestine*, really *Philistina*, which in the Old Testament (Ps. 60:8) and in Josephus is a designation of the land of the Philistines, was in later times by Greek and Latin writers applied to the whole country between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean. A name far more inclusive is that found in Heb. 11:9, viz. "*the Land of Promise*," referring, as it does, to all the land promised to the patriarchs, Gen. 15:18, from the Great Sea to the Euphrates, and from the Entrance of Hamath to the River of Egypt. The country east of the Jordan was generally known as Gilead, Deut. 34:1; Josh. 22:9; or as Gilead and Bashan, Deut. 3:10; II Kings 10:33. In the Middle Ages Palestine became known as *the Holy Land*, a name probably derived from Zech. 2:12.

Up to comparatively recent times Jerusalem was regarded as the center of the world; and according to Mercator's Chart Palestine may almost be said to occupy that position. On the one hand it was an isolated country, having the broad expanse of the Mediterranean to the west, the arid sands of the Syrian desert on the east, the towering peaks of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon to the north, and the rocky wilderness of Arabia Petraea on the south. A fit theatre indeed for a

people that was to be separate from the nations of the world, in order to preserve the knowledge and the service of the only true God. On the other hand it was a land centrally located, "between Asia and Africa and between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, which is Europe." The great trade routes connected it with the mighty empires of the ancient world. From this center the dawning light of Christianity could rapidly spread to three continents.

---

## 2. NATURAL FEATURES

a. **The four Longitudinal Sections.** The Holy Land is naturally divided into four sections that run parallel to one another from north to south. These are formed by a mountain chain, starting from the Taurus Mountains of Asia Minor and soon dividing into two ranges, known as the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. The Lebanon or Central Range reaches its greatest altitude of 10,000 feet before entering Palestine as a lofty plateau with occasional peaks. This plateau is broken by the plain of Esdraelon, south of which we have first a cluster of rounded mountain-tops and then a craggy narrow range, from 2,000 to 3,000 feet in height that gradually falls off into the Negeb (south country). The Eastern Range has its culminating point in Mount Hermon, from where it sinks into a high table-land with but few peaks, rising on the Jordan side to an average height of 2,500 feet, and gradually sloping into the Syrian desert on the east. These two mountain ranges are separated by the great gorge, extending from the sources of the Jordan to the Gulf of Elath, through which the Jordan River winds its way until it is lost in the Dead Sea. Besides the three sections thus formed there is the Maritime Plain, a low, narrow and, in some parts, undulating strip of land along the Mediterranean. These four, the Maritime Plain, the Central Range, the Arabah and the



Eastern Table-land form the great natural features of Palestine.

**b. The Climate of Palestine.** The most notable feature of the climate of Palestine is the division of the year into a rainy and a dry season. The rainy season extends from about the middle of October to approximately the middle of March, the rainfall being heaviest from December to February. The winter begins with the so-called "former rain," that is indispensable with a view to the preparation of the land for the reception of the seed; and ends with the "latter rain," which is very important, because it accelerates the ripening of the grain and immediately precedes the summer drought. In general the sky is very clear: one week after another passes by in the summer-time without as much as a single cloud intercepting the rays of the sun; and even in the winter there are few days without sunshine. The winds blow with great regularity and fulfil two important functions: in the winter the west and south-west winds, laden with moisture as they come from the sea, on touching the cold mountains cause the winter rains; and in the summer the drier north-west winds, blowing in upon a warm country, greatly moderate the daily heat. The north wind often causes severe cold during the winter months, while the east wind clears the air in the winter season, and in the summer often makes the heat oppressive. Fortunately the hot winds, called sirocco, are rare, since their heat is unbearable, they destroy plants and flowers and disqualify man and beast for their work. Naturally the temperature varies in different parts of the country. On a beautiful summer day the weather may be most delightful in the Shephelah, while, as the Arabs say, "the cold is at home" on the mountains of Judea and on the Eastern Plateau, and the Jordan Valley swelters beneath a torrid heat.

**c. The Natural Products and the Animals of Palestine.** The Holy Land was never rich in mineral products. It did not yield any of the noble metals, and the

mines of copper and lead were found only in the Lebanon district. Flint, on the other hand, was very plentiful, and was utilized for making knives and weapons, as we learn from the monuments and present-day excavations. The pitch of the Dead Sea region is mentioned in connection with the destruction of the cities of the plain.

The vegetable world of Palestine exhibited far greater variety, though the present condition of the land would hardly lead one to suspect its past fertility. There are now no forests save in the vicinity of Nazareth and Carmel and to the east of the River Jordan, while Scripture speaks of several, the most important being the forests of Lebanon and those of Bashan and Gilead. No doubt many of the forests mentioned in the Bible were merely thickets covering the western slopes of hills and mountains; and these are still very much in evidence, but to a great extent the pride of Lebanon has fallen and the oaks of Bashan have disappeared. Some of the most important trees mentioned in the Bible are, the oak, the pine, the poplar, the acacia, the cypress and the cedar. Of the fruit-bearing trees none surpassed the useful olive and the fertile fig-tree that adorned all inhabited places, while the date-palm of the Plain of Jericho also deserves special mention. Along with the fig-tree the vine is often named as an indigenous plant; it was so characteristic of Palestine that it was even stamped on coins as an emblem of the Holy Land. The most common grains were wheat and barley, of which the former furnished the staple food for man (though the poor also ate barley-bread), while the latter was chiefly used with straw as fodder for the cattle. The Hauran which often yielded an eighty- and a hundred-fold harvest of grain, was hence called "the granary of Palestine." The land produced vegetables too in great abundance, such as lentils, beans, cucumbers, mint, onions, melons etc.; and also a choice variety of such fruits as figs, olives, pomegranates, apricots, citrons, mulberries, etc. Moreover the beauty of the land was greatly enhanced

by a rich abundance of vari-colored, sweet-smelling flowers, as white and red roses, white and yellow lilies, anemones, hyacinths, tulips, etc. This is true especially of the Maritime Plain. Says George Adam Smith, "Over corn and moorland a million flowers are scattered—poppies, pimpernels, anemones, the convolvulus and the mallow, the narcissus and blue iris—*roses of Sharon and lilies of the valley.*" Hist. Geog., p. 149.

In the animal world there was an equally great variety. Of the domestic animals the sheep and the goat should be mentioned first; the former because its flesh was the only animal-meat regularly eaten and its wool was very valuable, and the latter since its milk was preferred to any other. Along with these cows and oxen furnished the chief material for sacrificial worship, while the oxen were also employed in plowing, threshing and for drawing wagons. Because of its remarkable endurance the ass was the principal beast of burden and was also extensively employed for trading purposes. Israel's destiny being a peaceful one, it was forbidden to multiply horses, which were chiefly associated with military undertakings. Yet it imported them in the days of David and especially of Solomon, who traded in Egyptian horses. Mules were plentiful since the time of David, and were used for riding and for bearing burdens; swine, on the other hand, regarded as unclean, were not kept by the Israelites. The dogs of Palestine were of the same variety as the pariah, prowling about the streets and through the suburbs of the city, and feeding on its refuse. They may be called the scavengers of the city.

Wild animals were also found in great abundance. The hart, the goat, the steenbock, the antelope and the gazelle furnished desirable game for the sportsman. Wild bears often destroyed the fields, while foxes spoiled the vineyards, and the stillness of night was broken by the yelping of jackals and hyenas. Lions too haunted the bushy banks of the Jordan and made traveling in that district rather pre-

carious. Bears and wolves even now infest the Ghor (Jordan Valley).

Bird life also had a fair representation in the Holy Land. There were the gentle dove with its beautiful plumage, glittering in the sunshine like gold and silver; the wild pigeon that built its nest in the clefts of the rocks; such birds of passage as the crane and the swallow; also the sparrow and many lesser birds. Besides these numerous birds of prey may be named, such as ravens, eagles, vultures, hawks, falcons, storks, etc.

---

### 3. THE MARITIME PLAIN

The Maritime Plain is naturally divided into four parts, each of which will be considered separately.

**a. Phœnicia.** This was a narrow strip of land in the far north-west of which Israel never took possession, though the greater part of it was certainly included in the Land of Promise. On the west it looked out upon the blue Mediterranean, while its eastern border seems to have been rather indefinite, notwithstanding the Bargylos and Lebanon mountains formed a sort of natural boundary. Roughly spoken it may be said to have extended from the river Orontes in the north to Mount Carmel in the south. This country consisted of two distinct regions: (1) The hill country with its magnificent mountain scenery, its great rivers, luxuriant vegetation and many villages. And (2) the plains, containing nearly all the important Phœnician cities that are known to us from history. We may distinguish the great plain extending for about 60 miles south from Gabala with the cities of Arvad and Simyra; the plain of Sidon, about 10 miles long and 2 broad; the plain of Tyre with a length of 20 and a breadth of 1 to 5 miles; and that of Acre, being 8 miles long and 6 broad. Each one of the last three was named after its principal city. They were famous for their cultivation, but especially as the

great trade centers, where the highways of the east and of the west met.

**b. The Plain of Sharon.** After leaving Phoenicia and crossing the promontory of Carmel, one soon enters the beautiful and fertile Plain of Sharon, spread out from Mount Carmel to Joppa, a distance of about 55 miles, with a breadth varying from 8 to 12 miles. It is at least in part an undulating country with hills not exceeding 250–300 feet in height. The plain was famous for its vegetation, its large oak wood and its flowers. Myriads of brightly colored lilies and anemones gave it a festive appearance. Isaiah couples the “glory of Lebanon” with the “splendour of Carmel and Sharon,” Is. 35:2. The two most important cities of the Plain of Sharon were Joppa and Caesarea. The former was a city of great antiquity, about 30 miles north-west of Jerusalem; it was the only natural harbour of Palestine and is now the western terminal of the Jaffa and Jerusalem railway. The latter was built by Herod the Great on the site of a town called Strato’s Tower, about 23 miles south of Mount Carmel, and was provided with an artificial harbour. Once the Roman capital of Palestine, it is now one of the most deserted and desolate sites in the land.

**c. The Shephelah.** South of the Plain of Sharon lies the Plain of Philistia; and between this and the Central Range is a series of low hills, “culminating in hogs’ backs, running north and south, and rising in places to 1200 feet above the sea.” These bare limestone hills are not spurs of the Central Range, which rises to far greater heights, but are separated from it by valleys from 500 to 1000 feet deep. This region, known as the Shephelah, was always debatable land, now belonging to the Israelites and anon in possession of the Philistines. There were many villages scattered through this district, though the land was but partly under cultivation. The hiding places being many and secure, it was a fit theatre for and the frequent scene of



guerilla warfare. Here Gezer was perched on a lonely hill, commanding the main road through the hills in the famous valley of Ajalon. Here too were Zorah and Eshtaol, reminding one of Samson's exploits, the valley of Elah, the cave of Adullam, and some of the battle-fields of Judas Maccabeus.

**d. The Plain of Philistia.** West of the Shephelah the undulating Plain of Philistia rolls off to the sea. The length of this territory was about 50 miles and its breadth 15. The greater part of it was a low plain, unhealthy during part of the year, but very fertile. Heavy crops of grain and a rich abundance of oranges, figs, olives and other fruits crowned the labour of man. The coastline was fringed with a row of sand dunes that continually encroached on the cultivated lands. This country, though part of the Promised Land, was never wrested from the powerful Philistines, a warlike people, that had probably migrated thither from Crete and were often more than a match for the Israelites. They were skilled warriors and from the earliest times had a standing army. Their main strength lay in their five cities, that were really five independent monarchies, together forming a confederacy. These cities were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron, of which the first three were situated near the coast and the last two more inland. Besides these there were other cities of no mean importance, such as Libnah and Jabneh, Lachish and Eglon.

---

#### 4. THE CENTRAL MOUNTAIN RANGE

**a. The Mountains of Upper Galilee.** Josephus already, and with good reasons, distinguished between Upper and Lower Galilee, since the former is far more elevated than the latter. Upper Galilee is bounded on the north by the river Litany (Leontes) which, rising at Baalbec, first flows in a south-western direction, then, turning sharply, forces its way through deep and narrow gorges to the sea.



This river separates Upper Galilee from the towering heights of Lebanon. A lofty plateau extends south of it, until it terminates in a range of peaks from 2,500 to 3,500 feet high, running east and west on a parallel of latitude just north of Acre (Ptolomais). To the north of this dividing line the average height of the plateau is 2,000 feet, while south of it the hills do not rise higher than 1,200, and the plains average only 500 to 700 feet. This district was once the possession of the tribes of Asher and Naphtali, and is named in Scripture "Mount Naphtali," Josh. 20:7 (cf. also Judg. 5:18) and "Galilee of the Gentiles," Is. 9:1. The plateau consisted of a series of plains of which the one opened into the other, with fine tracts of cultivated, well-watered land, rich pastures, and splendid woodlands and orchards. The highest mountain-peak of Upper Galilee is the Jebel Jermuk, north-west of the sea of Galilee, rising to a height of 4,000 feet. Since this region plays no very important part in the history of revelation, there are but few of its cities that call for special mention, such as Kedesh, one of the cities of refuge; Hazor, the ancient Canaanite capital; Merom, where Jewish pilgrims visit the graves of Hillel and Shammai; and Safed which is now the most important city of the entire district.

**b. The Mountains of Lower Galilee and the Plain of Esdraelon.** Lower Galilee was one of the principal scenes of our Lord's activity. Its aspect was quite different from that of Upper Galilee. While north of the dividing line the mountain ranges run north and south, Lower Galilee has a series of low rounded hills, running from east to west, with broad intersecting valleys. The peaks do not rise above 1,800 feet, and are generally crowned with shrubs and trees, while the valleys are verdant with vegetation and decked with flowers. There is Mount Tabor, the reputed mountain of the Transfiguration, rising like a long arched dome, and covered to its summit with verdure. To the north of it, and just west of the sea of Galilee, is Kurin Hattin

(Horns of Hattin), the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes; to the south rise the Hill of Moreh or Little Hermon, with Nain perched safely on its side, and the mountains of Gilboa, the scene of many battles; and on the west appear in close proximity the hills of Nazareth, among which Jesus spent his boyhood days, and in the distance the promontory of Carmel, the lonely sentinel of the sea.

Between these mountains is the great Plain of Esdraelon, also called "the Valley of Megiddo," II Chron. 35:22. It is an extremely fertile plain, one of the richest natural fields in the world; yet it was scarcely a fit place for habitation, since the swollen Kishon and the abundance of fountains annually brought fruitfulness indeed, but also converted great sections of the plain into a dangerous quagmire during the winter season. Hence the villages of this region are mostly built on the inclines of the surrounding mountains. This great Plain of Jezreel was the scene of many bloody battles from the days of Barak down to the time of Napoleon, and is for that reason often styled "the battle-field of the world."

Lower Galilee is dotted, as might be expected, with historical places, such as Endor and Beth-shan, reminding one of the sad termination of Saul's career; Jezreel, the ancient residence of Ahab; Shunem, where the Philistines once stood in battle-array against Saul; and Megiddo, near which the pious Josia was slain. There too were Nazareth, Nain and Cana, some of the principal scenes of our Lord's ministry.

**c. The Mountains of Samaria.** Leaving the Plain of Esdraelon and climbing the heights that gird it on the south, the traveler finds himself on the hills of Samaria. Looking south one sees before one a fertile plateau with clusters of hills and a few high peaks in various directions. It differs from the mountain district of Galilee in that it is more open and fair. In the northern section especially the elevations are slight, the slopes gentle and the valleys high and broad, each opening into the other, thus really forming a

series of connected, well-watered plains, fit for cultivation and yielding abundant harvests. In the southern part of Samaria the mountains are different. "Instead of ranges of twelve miles in length with fine open valleys between them, we have here an abrupt corrugated slope of some three miles, falling a distance of 2,500 feet to the Jordan below, a high bulwark of mountains, the most difficult corner of the whole frontier." McCoun, *The Holy Land in Geography* p. 31. The earliest name given to the mountains of Samaria excluding Carmel, which also extends southward into Samaria, is "Mount Ephraim," Josh. 17:15; 19:50; Judg. 3:27, etc. Their most important peaks were Ebal and Gerizim, the scene of Israel's great inaugural service on taking possession of the land, rising respectively to a height of 3,075 and 2,850 feet, and separated by a smiling valley. Among the most important cities of Samaria we have ancient Shechem, a city of refuge, situated between the two famous peaks; Shiloh, where the tabernacle stood in the period of the Judges; Tirzah, famous for its beauty and once the capital of Ephraim; the strong city of Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom since the days of Omri; and Sichar, where our Saviour conversed with the Samaritan woman.

**d. The Mountains of Judea.** These mountains have some distinctive features: they rise to greater height but are more rugged and barren than the mountains of Samaria, although occasional fruitful vales are not wanting even here. Judea was a pastoral rather than an agricultural country. The "hill country of Judah" may be regarded as the nucleus of this mountain district, extending, as it does, from the south of Bethlehem to beyond Hebron. It is distinguished from the surrounding mountains by an immediate rise in elevation. At Tekoa it is 2,798 feet, and it reaches a height of 3,546 feet just north of Hebron, from where it gradually descends until it rolls off into the Negeb, a sloping and fertile country, where the hills break down in a

terraced plateau. It extends from Hebron in the north to the wall of cliffs that forms the edge of the desert of Tih (wandering). To the west of the mountains of Judah are the low hills, descending terrace-like into the Plain of Philistia, while on the eastern side is a sharp descent from 2,600 feet above to 1,292 feet below the level of the sea, into the Jeshimon by the shores of the Dead Sea, one of the most solitary, barren and uninviting deserts of the Holy Land. Some of the most important peaks of the rugged and bare hill-country of Judea are Mount Hebron, the Mount of Olives, and the mountains on which Jerusalem was built, viz. Sion, Moria and Acra. Among the notable cities of this district we have Beersheba, the southern border-city; Gerar, where the patriarchs sojourned; Tekoa, the birthplace of the prophet Amos; ancient Hebron (Kirjath-Arba), one of the oldest cities of Palestine, built even before Abraham's time; Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Saviour; and further Mizpah, Gibeon, Gibeon, Ramah, etc. Jerusalem requires separate treatment.

**e. Jerusalem and its Environs.** The Holy Land contained also one Holy City, the special habitation of the Lord, the joy of Israel's tribes, the type of that ideal city to which believers look forward with gladsome expectation,—Jerusalem, the City of God. The name may be a compound of two older names, Jebus and Salem, changed for the sake of euphony to Jerusalem. It was built on ridges rising to a height of about 2,500 feet. These were separated from the Central Range and from the Mount of Olives by unusually deep and precipitous ravines, the valley of the Kedron on the east and the valley of Hinnom on the west, the two uniting just south of the city. Between them ran a third and similar valley, called the Tyropoean (cheesemaker's) valley, dividing the old city, i.e. the lower section, into two parts. These valleys together with other smaller spurs divided the city into four sections built on as many heights. The south-western and highest part of the city is the tradi-

tional Sion (though in all probability Sion is really to be looked for on the eastern mountain); the north-western section was called Acra; and the eastern was identified as Moria, with Ophel as its southern extremity; while north of both Acra and Moria was the upper city Bezetha. We may distinguish three walls: the first built by David and Solomon, including Sion, Moria and Ophel; the second was constructed before the time of Hezekiah and surrounded Acra also; and the third, built by Herod Agrippa I, included Bezetha as well. A strong city indeed and hard to approach, its walls in many places rising from the brink of the deep valleys, while it is immediately connected with the surrounding mountains only in the north-west. But though it was thus isolated on the one hand, on the other it was connected by many roads, winding through the adjacent valleys, with several of the surrounding cities, such as Gibeon, Ramah, Michmash, Ai and Bethel to the north; Bethany and Jericho on the east; Bethlehem and Hebron to the south; Gaza to the south-west; Emmaus, Kirjath-jearim and Joppa on the west; and Gibeon, Mizpah and Beth-horon to the north-west. Just east of the city is the famous Mount of Olives, its northern peak called the Viri Galilaei, Acts 1:11, and its southern, the Mount of Offense, II Kings 23:13. South of the city and rising out of the valley of Hinnom is the Hill of Evil Counsel. Across the valley of Kedron opposite the Dome of the Rock the Garden of Gethsemane is still pointed out, while the Grotto of Jeremiah north of the city probably marks the site of Calvary.

---

## 5. THE EASTERN MOUNTAIN RANGE

The whole Eastern Mountain Range is designated in the Old Testament as "the mountains of Abarim," Num. 33:47, 48; Deut. 32:49, (i. e. those on the other side). It is in reality a lofty table-land, extending from snow-capped Hermon in the north to the land of Edom in the south, and



sloping almost imperceptibly into the Syrian desert on the east. The general width of this district was about 30 miles, increasing to 80 however in the Hauran. It was a land of great promise, but of a promise not fulfilled on account of the devastating influences of the desert and of "the children of the east." We must distinguish three sections in this trans-Jordanic region.

**a. The Hauran or Bashan.** The name Hauran is applied to the whole district lying between Mount Hermon and the river Yarmuk. The limestone forming the basis of this country is covered by volcanic deposits. The soil is described as "rich red loam resting on beds of ash," and is very fertile. The Hauran consists of different parts. Along the shores of the Galilean sea is the Jaulan, the Gaulonitis of the Roman period, where of old were the kingdoms of Maacah and Geshur. East of the Jaulan is the Hauran proper, a great plain, perhaps 50 miles long by 20 broad. It is scarcely broken by a hill and is absolutely treeless. This constituted the New Testament Auranitis, a very fruitful country, where wheat often yielded an eighty- and barley even an hundred-fold harvest. The south-eastern portion of the plain is now called En Nukra (the hollow hearth), and is probably the Scriptural Batanea. Trachonitis may have been still farther east. This country was once thickly settled, as may be seen from the amazing number of ruins scattered throughout the land. Of the cities formerly found in this district we mention only Golan, one of the cities of refuge and Edrei, the capital of Bashan with its subterranean streets, residences and storehouses.

**b. Mount Gilead.** This is the central section of the Eastern Range, extending from the river Yarmuk in the north to a line in the vicinity of Heshbon and Rabbath-Ammon in the south, though the name is also employed in a more limited sense. In this region the volcanic elements are absent and limestone makes its appearance. The river Jabbok, flowing through a valley 2,000 feet deep, divides this

district into two parts. The northern half, which may be called Mount Gilead proper, is characterized by a perceptible rise of the plateau, as compared with the Hauran, by its splendid forests of sturdy oaks, and by its rich and varied vegetation. Here was the "wood of Ephraim," where Absalom was slain, and from here came the celebrated "balm of Gilead." The southern section of the country is now called the Belka (empty) district. In this part of the land we attain to still greater heights of 3,500 feet, but the descent to the river Jordan is less precipitous. The places of special interest in Gilead are Ramoth-Gilead, a city of refuge, where Ahab was slain and Jehu was anointed king; Mahanaim, where the angels of God welcomed Jacob on his return, and Pniel, the scene of his spiritual victory; Gerasa, the ruins of which still testify to its former glory; and Jabes, saved by Saul from the Ammonites.

**c. The Plains of Moab.** These plains are not to be identified with the land of Moab, though for a time, no doubt, the Moabites possessed this whole district. They extended, roughly speaking, from the northern extremity of the Dead Sea to the wady Kurahi, which separated the land of Moab from the territory of the Edomites. The trees so characteristic of Gilead are absent from the highlands of Moab. The landscape is bare and consists of a large tract of pasture-land, 2,500 to 3,300 feet high, rolling off into the Syrian desert. On the western edge the plateau rises to its greatest height, proud headlands overlooking the Salt Sea Valley 4,000 feet below. The district is divided by the valley of the Arnon, which always formed the boundary-line between Israel and Moab. In this country is Mount Peor on which Balaam stood, when he blessed Israel, and Mount Nebo from where Moses saw the promised land. And there in some valley Israel's great leader was laid to rest by God himself. The most notable places of the Plains of Moab are Dibon, where the Moabite Stone was found; Heshbon, the capital of the Amorite king Sihon; Bezer, a



city of refuge; and Medeba, where David was victorious over the Ammonites.

---

## 6. THE JORDAN VALLEY AND THE WATERS OF PALESTINE

**a. The Arabah.** The most characteristic feature of the Holy Land is the Jordan Valley, a remarkable depression, beginning at the sources of the river and continuing southward to the Elanitic Gulf. At its northern extremity it is 1,700 feet above sea-level. Just south of lake Merom (or Huleh) it begins its dip below the level of the sea and, falling 60 feet to the mile, it reaches a depth of 682 feet below the Mediterranean at the Sea of Galilee. In its extension from the Galilean to the Dead Sea it drops another 610 feet in a distance of 65 miles. Hence at the Dead Sea it is 1,290 feet below sea-level, the bottom of the Salt Sea being 1,300 feet deeper still. From this point it gradually ascends, even rising above the level of the Mediterranean long before it reaches the Gulf of Akaba. This long rift of from 2 to 15 miles wide, called the Arabah, is the deepest place of the dry land, since no other part of our earth, uncovered by water, sinks to a depth of 300 feet below the sea. And through it flows one of the most remarkable rivers of the world,—the River Jordan.

**b. The Sources of the Jordan and the Upper Jordan.** The River Jordan has four sources. (1) The most northerly one is at Hasbeiyah on Mount Hermon. (2) Next is the Nahr Bareighit, which is the only source not rising on Hermon's slope. (3) A source far more important than either of these, in fact the one having the largest flow of water, gushes out of Tell-el-Kady, a large mound of limestone rock. (4) Finally there is the Nahr Banias with its impressive origin, coming as it were from the very roots of Hermon a full-grown river. The Upper Jordan is formed by the confluence of these perennial streams. It soon loses itself

in the marsh and Lake of Huleh (waters of Merom, Josh. 11:5, 7), a triangular sheet of water three miles wide. At the Lake the Jordan is on the level of the Mediterranean, but from here descends 680 feet to the Sea of Galilee.

c. **The Sea of Galilee.** Among the places held sacred in memory the Sea of Galilee will always occupy an important place. This beautiful Lake is 13 miles long and, at its northern end, 9 miles wide, where it also has its greatest depth, about 750 feet. On the west the Galilean hills come down almost to the shore, leaving only a narrow strip of coast, except where it widens into "the little Ghor," probably *the land of Gennesaret*, which is a strip of coastland 4 miles wide. The northern end of the Sea is more open. And on the east side the towering heights of the Jaulan enclose the Lake, leaving its shores open only to the south, where the Jordan leaves the Lake in a valley 4 miles wide. The Lake is still beautiful, and as of old its placid waters are often disturbed by the storms that sweep down upon it from the mountain passes; but the cities that once encircled it, as Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Magdala and others, have either disappeared, or are now represented by insignificant and often unsightly villages. Only Tiberias has retained something of its former splendour.

d. **The Lower Jordan.** Leaving the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River enters the Ghor (rift). The length of the valley from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is 65 miles as the crow flies, but owing to the windings of the channel the river has a length of 200 miles, cf. Hastings, *Art. Jordan*. Forbidding mountain-walls frown on either side, the eastern surpassing the western in height, while the width of the valley varies from 4 to 15 miles, attaining its greatest breadth at the Plain of Jericho. The bed of the river is "150 feet deeper than the Ghor and from 500 feet to a mile broad, which is the distance between the banks when the Jordan is at its full in April." McCoun, *Geography* p. 50. Parts of the Arabah were once largely cultivated, the Plain of Jeri-

cho especially being famous for its luxuriance; but on the whole it might well be styled a wilderness (Arabah). There were but few villages and cities in the valley, such as Bethshan, Beth-abara, Abel-Meholah, Succoth, Phasaelis and Jericho, due, no doubt, to the oppressive heat that prevailed and to the wild beasts that infested the jungle of the Jordan.

**e. The Dead Sea.** This Sea is known in the Old Testament as "the Salt Sea," Gen 14:3, "the Sea of the Plain," Deut. 3:17, and "the East Sea," Joel 2:20. It is 53 miles long and 10 wide, its greatest depth, in the north-east corner, being 1,300 feet, while its southern extremity does not contain more than 15 feet of water. The eastern shore is broken only by the valley of the Arnon and is of a regular oblong shape, though in one place its regularity is disturbed by El-Lisan (the tongue), a peninsula of the shape of a spurned boot. The most prominent feature of the western shore is the Jeshimon that lies behind a rocky barrier, through which several narrow gorges, three or four miles apart, lead down to the Sea. One of the most notable oases of this terrible desert is that of Engedi. The shores of the Dead Sea have a beach of clean gravel, but covered by driftwood, much of which is coated with salt. Its waters have a beautiful blue color, but are bitter and four times as salt as ordinary sea water. This is due to the fact that, though it receives the Jordan and four or five smaller streams, it has no issue for its water, save through evaporation. To its solid ingredients again the Sea owes its extreme buoyancy. Robinson claims that he could lie, sit and even stand in the water. Says George Adam Smith, "The water is very nauseous to the taste and oily to the touch, leaving on the skin, when it dries, a thick crust of salt." Hist. Geog. p. 501. Part of this Sea undoubtedly covers the plain, beautiful "as the garden of the Lord," where once the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar were situated.

**f. The Brooks of Palestine.** The Jordan is not the

only river in the Holy Land, though perhaps all the others are more properly called brooks, or mountain torrents. They are dry during the greater part of the year, but in the winter months often appear as large and rushing streams. There are especially two that flow from the Central Range eastward into the Mediterranean, viz. the Kishon, watering the Plain of Esdraelon, in which a part of Sisera's army found a watery grave; and the brook Besor on the southern frontier, where David left a part of his pursuing army, I Sam 30:9, 10. On the other side of the water-shed the Farah enters the Jordan just opposite the Jabbok; the brook of Cherith, in the neighborhood of Jericho; while the brook Kedron runs past Jerusalem into the Dead Sea. On the other side of the Jordan the Yarmuk flows from the highlands of Bashan into the Jordan just south of the Sea of Galilee; the Jabbok descends from the table-land of Gilead and enters the River Jordan about 20 miles north of the Dead Sea; and the Arnon, dividing the Plains of Moab, has its outlet in the Salt Sea.

---

## 7. THE POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF THE HOLY LAND

a. **Among the earliest Inhabitants.** Little is known of the tribes that first inhabited Palestine. It is even uncertain, whether they were of Hamitic or of Semitic stock. We derive our knowledge regarding them principally from Gen. 14:5-7 and Deut. 2:10-23. They were generally regarded as giants by those who came after them. The *Rephaim* (lofty men) dwelt on the highlands of Bashan, where they gradually lost their nationality and were merged with the Amorites. It seems that some of them also settled west of the Jordan, II Sam. 5:18. The *Zuzim* (tall ones), probably identical with the *Zamzumim*, seem to have occupied the eastern table-land between the Jabbok and the Arnon. They were dispossessed by the Ammonites, who in turn were

driven out by the Amorites. South of the river Arnon the *Enim* (terrible ones) had their home, until their land was occupied by the Moabites. Mount Seir was the dwelling-place of the *Horim* (cave-dwellers) who lived in caves, such as are still abundantly found in that region, especially at Sela, called Petra by the Greeks. Their land was finally taken by the Edomites. The *Avim* (ruins, or dwellers in ruins) inhabited the Shephelah between the Philistine Plain and the mountains of Judah. They were conquered by the Caphtorim who took their place. And finally the *Anakim* (long-necked ones) had their principal home at Hebron and in the surrounding country, where they maintained a foothold long after the Canaanites entered the land.

**b. Among the Canaanite Races.** When the chosen family entered the Holy Land, this was occupied by tribes of Hamitic origin. They were often called Canaanites, since the nation of that name was both the original stock and in possession of the best part of the land. The *Zidonians*, famous traders of the Mediterranean world, occupied a narrow strip of territory between Mount Lebanon and the sea north of Carmel. The *Canaanites* proper were in possession of the best portion of the land, dwelling, as they did, in the Plain of Esdraelon, in the Plain of Sharon, and in the five cities of the Plain in the Jordan valley. The Maritime Plain south of the habitat of the Canaanites was occupied by the *Philistines*, also called Caphtorim, Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7. It is generally thought that they or a nucleus of the nation migrated thither from Caphtor, probably Crete. Turning now to the mountain region, we find that the powerful *Hittites* in all probability occupied the northern part of it even as far as the Euphrates, while a part of them seem to have dwelt in the vicinity of Hebron, Gen. 23. The position of the *Girgashites* is uncertain, though some slight indications point to the region west of the Sea of Galilee. The peace-loving *Hivites* were located between Mount Carmel and what was afterwards known as the border of Benjamin,



having Shechem as their principal city. Four of their cities formed the Gibeonite league that made a treaty with Joshua, Josh. 9:3-15. The *Perizzites* (villagers) probably occupied the northern part of the Shephelah, since they are always named in connection with the Canaanites, and the foothills were a fit region for clusters of villages. In and round about Jebus, afterwards called Jerusalem, the *Jebusites* made their home, until the city was finally taken by David. The *Amorites* or mountaineers probably constituted the most powerful tribe of all. Originally they inhabited the wilderness between Hebron and the Dead Sea. In later times they pushed northward, crossed the Jordan and occupied the eastern table-land north of the Sea of the Plain, dispossessing both the Ammonites and the Rephaim.

**c. Among the Twelve Tribes.** After the conquest of Palestine by Israel it was divided among the twelve tribes, the most pastoral among them, viz. Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasse, receiving their portion on the east side of the Jordan, while the other nine and half tribes occupied the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean. The tribe of *Reuben* was separated from Moab on the south by the River Arnon; on the west it had the Dead Sea and the lower end of the Jordan, while to the east it looked out upon the Syrian desert. Its northern boundary extended from Beth-Jeshimoth in a north-easterly direction to a little south of Rabbath-Ammon. North of Reuben was the tribe of *Gad*, with the River Jordan on the west and the desert on the east, its northern limits extending from Mahanaim to the southern extremity of the Galilean Sea. Above this line the half tribe of *Manasseh* had its territory, the whole land of Bashan, extending from Mahanaim to Mount Hermon, and from the Jordan and the northern lakes to the desert.

In western Palestine the tribe of *Simeon* received a portion of the land, given to Judah when the first division was made. It was located in the extreme south between the

mountains and the desert, but its boundaries were very indeterminate. This tribe finally seems to have lost its individuality. North of it was the territory of *Judah*, bounded on the east by the Dead Sea and on the west by the Mediterranean. Its northern boundary ran from the upper extremity of the Dead Sea in a direction generally west, but with great irregularity, to the great Western Sea. A part of this territory, however, remained in possession of the Philistines. Between Judah on the south and Ephraim on the north lay the tribes of *Benjamin* and *Dan*, the former touching the Jordan on the east, the latter, the Mediterranean on the west. The tribe of Dan found that it was unable to take possession of the greater part of its territory, and therefore to a great extent migrated to Laish, a Sidonian city in the north. The possession of Ephraim was north of the land assigned to Dan and Benjamin, and extended from the River Jordan to the great Sea, practically constituting the center of the country. Then followed the other half tribe of *Manasseh*, its northern boundary following the ridge of Carmel, except by the sea, in a south-eastern direction, then turning sharply to the north and again east to the Jordan. To the north and west of Manasseh the territory of *Issachar* extended from the ridge of Carmel to the Jordan, its northern boundary reaching the river just south of the Galilean Sea. The tribe of *Asher* dwelt along the sea-coast from Mount Carmel to Sidon. In reality it possessed but a small part of this territory, the Canaanites retaining the most important places. The possession of *Zebulon* extended from Mount Carmel towards the Sea of Galilee, without reaching this however, and was bounded on the south by Manasseh and Issachar, and on the north by Asher and Naphtali. And the last named tribe occupied a stretch of country north of Zebulon and Issachar, between Asher and the Jordan, extending to the north as far as Mount Hermon.

d. **In the Time of Christ.** The New Testament reveals to us a division of the Holy Land quite different from



the one just described. There was first of all *Judea*, the largest of the existing provinces, embracing the territory that formerly belonged to Simeon, Judah, Benjamin and Dan, with a small section of Ephraim. It was the home of the Jews *par excellence*, that prided themselves on their genealogy and on their strict adherence to the law and to the traditions of the fathers. North of this was *Samaria*, from its location between Judea and Galilee also called "the central province." Its northern line followed the Carmel range of mountains and then, turning east, reached the Jordan about 10 miles south of the Sea of Galilee. It practically consisted of the territory once possessed by Ephraim and Manasseh. The Plain of Sarona was occupied almost exclusively by Gentiles, while the mountain district was inhabited by the Samaritans, a people of mixed origin. The most northern province was *Galilee*, extending from Mount Carmel to Lebanon, and from the River Jordan and the Sea of Galilee to Phoenicia and the Mediterranean. Its people were Jews indeed, but not of unmixed origin; they were less fanatic and legalistic than the Jews of Judea and far more open to conviction. On the east side of the River Jordan Perea extended from the Dead Sea and the Jordan to the Syrian desert, and from the River Arnon to a line about parallel with the northern boundary of Samaria. It was inhabited by Jews, but with a large admixture of Gentiles. The remaining province north of Perea was often called Decapolis, a name strictly speaking applicable only to a confederacy of 10 cities that were partly located in this region. This country embraced five sections, viz. Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Trachonitis, Iturea and Batanea.

---

## II. THE LANDS OF THE GENTILES

---

### 1. The Countries Adjoining Palestine

a. **Syria.** In the Bible this land is known as Aram

(translated Syria), the name Syria dating from the Greek period. In its widest application this appellative refers to all that tract of land that is bounded on the north by the Taurus Mountains, on the west by the Mediterranean, and on the east and south by the great deserts of Syria and Arabia. Thus understood, Palestine really formed a part of Syria. In a more restricted sense, however, it applied to the country east and north-east of the Holy Land. It was inhabited by the Semitic tribe of the Aramaeans, descendants of Aram, the son of Shem, Gen. 10:22. They did not form one mighty united empire, but were divided into several smaller monarchies, of which in Old Testament times Aram Zobah, II Sam. 8:3; 10:6 ff. and Aram Damascus, I Kings 15:18; 20:1, 34, were the most important. In the repeated struggles of Israel with the Syrians now the former and anon the latter had the upper hand, cf. II Sam. 8; 10; I Kings 20:22; II Kings 6-8; 12:17 ff.; 13:14 ff. When the great Oriental empires extended their conquests to the west, Syria was successively overrun and subdued by Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Greeks. Under the Seleucidae a new Syrian kingdom was formed, which after many and prolonged struggles was finally reduced to a Roman province, the governor of Syria also ruling Palestine. The most important cities of Syria were Damascus, known from the days of Abraham, a veritable garden of beauty; and the far more recent city of Antioch on the Orontes, the fruitful center from which Christianity spread among the Gentiles.

**b. Moab and Ammon.** The Moabites and Ammonites were the descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and therefore related to Israel. The Moabites replaced the Enim and Zuzim, and at one time possessed the country east of the Dead Sea and the River Jordan as far north as the Jabbok. But the Amorites wrested the northern part of this territory from them and compelled them to remain south of the River Arnon. On the southern half of the Plains of

Moab they knew both the joy of independence and the bitterness of subjection to Israel. The Ammonites were a predatory wandering people, living mostly to the east of Gilead, but without any permanent possession. They often oppressed Israel and were finally conquered by David.

c. **Edom.** South of the land of Moab and separated from it by the brook of Zered, was the country of the Edomites. It extended southward to the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akaba and the country of the Midianites. On the east it reached out to the great Arabian desert; and on the west it was bounded by the Arabah, though it may have extended a little to the west of it. It was a mountainous but fruitful land, where numerous cave-dwellings still remind one of the ancient Horim. After the exile the Edomites pushed across the Arabah and even occupied the Negeb as far as Hebron.

---

## 2. Egypt

The land of Israel's bondage was bounded on the north by the Mediterranean, on the south by Nubia, on the east by the Arabian desert and the Red Sea, and on the west by the great African desert. In the Old Testament it is usually called Mizraim. The most important feature of it was the river Nile, the cause of its remarkable fertility. Springing from the lakes of Central Africa, it flows in a northerly direction and empties into the Mediterranean. Its annual overflow, due to the rains in Central Africa, constantly yields new soil and perpetuates the fertility of the land. The land of Goshen, where the Israelites spent the time of their bondage, was one of the most fruitful sections of the country, located in the eastern part of the Nile valley, and extending from On in the south to the delta in the north. The people of Egypt were of Hamitic stock; their civilization, the earliest known in history. Some of their most important cities

mentioned in Scripture are No or No-Ammon, Memphis, On, Raamses, Pithom and Alexandria.

---

### 3. Arabia and the Sinaitic Peninsula

Arabia is the most westerly of the three great peninsulas in southern Asia. It is bounded on the east by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, on the south by the Indian Ocean, and on the west by the Red Sea. Northward it projects and gradually passes into the Syrian desert. The country was divided into Arabia Felix, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Petraea. Of these parts only the latter played an important role in the history of revelation. The name was applied to the district between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, and included the Sinaitic Peninsula, where God constituted Israel a theocracy, promulgated his law, and taught his people a life of faithful dependence on him. This region has two main divisions: (1) The wilderness of Paran (et Tih = the wandering), a sterile table-land from 2,000 to 2,500 feet high, sloping away on the north to a plain of white sand that reached to the Mediterranean, and was generally called "the wilderness of Shur." On the other three sides a chain of mountains enclose it, 4,000 feet high, called Jebel et Tih. In this wilderness the children of Israel wandered for 38 years. (2) The Sinaitic Mountains to the south of et Tih, and between the Gulf of Akaba and the Gulf of Suez. Three different peaks were pointed out in the course of time as the "Mountain of the Law." Jebel Musa is supported by local tradition, and Jebel Serbal is favored by Lepsius, while most recent travelers argue that Ras es Sufsafeh best meets the requirements. Besides these two main divisions there were three minor ones: (1) The narrow plain between the mountains and the western arm of the Red Sea, of which the northern portion was called, "the wilderness of Etham," and the southern, "the wilder-

ness of Sin." (2) The Arabah; and (5) the Negeb, both of which we have already described.

---

#### 4. The Countries East of the Euphrates

**a. Babylonia.** The most southerly of the lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates, is Babylonia or Chaldea. It extends from the Persian Gulf in a north-westerly direction to the point where the rivers approach each other most, and is therefore co-extensive with the surpassingly fertile plain of Shinar. The fruitfulness of this country, notwithstanding its dearth of rain, finds its explanation in the fact that the two great adjoining rivers annually overflow, when the snow melts on the highlands of Armenia. Babylonia was always a land of mixed races and tongues. The Sumerians were the oldest inhabitants, but very early the Semites also made their appearance and gradually gained a controlling influence. From Ur of the Chaldees (probably Mugheir) Abraham was called; and to this country the people of Judah were carried captive. Its principal cities were Babylon, Erech, Accad, Calneh and Sefarvaim.

**b. Mesopotamia.** The second country between the two great rivers, just north of Babylonia, was Mesopotamia. In the Old Testament it is called Aram Naharaim (translated *Mesopotamia*) and Paddan-Aram. The northern part of this country is hilly and fruitful, while the southern is level and comparatively barren. The original inhabitants were Semites, who spoke Aramaic. The land once formed a part of the Hittite empire, and was afterwards incorporated in the Assyrian. At Haran in Mesopotamia Abraham rested, when he journeyed to Canaan, and Jacob watched the flocks of Laban. From Pethor Balaam was called to curse Israel, and at Carchemish Nebuchadnezzar won a decisive victory over Pharaoh Necho.

**c. Assyria.** The land of Assyria, not to be identified



with the empire of that name, is north-east of Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and the Zagros mountains, having the Armenian highlands on the north and Elam to the south. This mountainous country is not as fertile as Babylonia, but has a delightful climate. The inhabitants were descendants of Asshur, the son of Shem, and spoke the same language as the Babylonians. Many interesting inscriptions of both these nations have been brought to light in recent years. There is but one Assyrian city that occupies an important place on the pages of Holy Writ, viz. Nineveh, that "exceeding great city," the scene of Jonah's labors, the pride of the Assyrian empire. The prophet Nahum gives us a striking pen-picture of its destruction. Its long hidden treasures have now been bared by excavations.

**d. Elam.** South-east of Assyria and like this between the river Tigris and the Zagros mountains, lay the land of Elam, also called Susiana. It included both a mountainous district and a very fertile tract of lowland, and was originally inhabited by the descendants of Elam, the first-born of Shem, who, it would seem, were gradually incorporated in non-Semitic tribes. This may offer an explanation for the fact that their language was not Semitic. We already meet with Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam in Gen. 14:1. And in later books of the Bible we often read of Shushan, the city and the palace.

**e. Media.** This land is bounded on the north by the river Araxes and the Caspian Sea, by the great desert of Iram on the east, and by Persia on the south, while the Zagros mountains separate it from both Elam and Assyria. The Medes were of Japhetic stock and a warlike and independent people. Their capital was Ecbatana, where the decree of Cyrus respecting the building of the temple was found, Ezra 6:2.

**f. Persia.** The early books of the Old Testament do not make mention of this land, but in its later writings it is very prominent. It was south-east of Elam between

Media and the Persian Gulf, had a sandy plain along the Gulf and a mountainous plateau north of it. The people of this country were Aryans, who were at first subject to the Medes, but afterwards revolted under Cyrus the Great and soon gained the ascendancy, subjecting one powerful nation after another. It was their conquest of Babylon that led to the restoration of the Jews to their land.

---

## 5. The New Testament World

**a. Asia Minor.** In connection with the apostolic labors among the Gentiles no country equals Asia Minor in importance. The name dates from the fourth century A. D. The inhabitants were Indo-Germanic with a large quota of Semities. After the conquests of Alexander the Great they were Hellenized. The many Jews of the western diaspora that settled here were also powerfully affected by Greek civilization and spoke the Greek language. Asia Minor proved to be a very fruitful field for missionary labors. We may distinguish: (1) The southern provinces of the Mediterranean coast, Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia; (2) The western provinces on the Aegean Sea, Mysia, Lydia and Caria; (3) The northern provinces on the Black Sea, Pontus, Paphlagonia and Bithynia; and (4) The five provinces of the interior, Galatia, Capadocia, Pisidia, Lycaonia and Phrygia. At the time of the Roman empire Asia Minor was politically divided into Asia (including Caria, Lydia, Mysia and part of Phrygia); Pontus and Bithynia united; Galatia (including Galatia proper, Lycaonia, Pisidia and a part of Phrygia); Cappadocia; Pamphylia and Lycia; and Cilicia. In connection with the study of the New Testament the most important cities of Asia Minor are Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul, and the cities where Christian churches were established, viz. Sardis, Philadelphia, Thyatira, Ephesus and Smyrna in Lydia; Pergamos and Troas in Mysia; Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis in Phrygia;



Antioch in Pisidia; and Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia.

**b. Macedonia.** The vision of the Macedonian man called Paul from Asia Minor to Macedonia, a European country, bounded on the north by Moesia, on the east by the Aegean Sea and Thrace, on the west by Illyricum and on the south by Greece. It consists of two plains, watered by the rivers Axios and Strymon, and traversed by the great Roman military road, the Via Egnatia. The apostle of the Gentiles found here a fruitful field of labor, especially at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea

**c. Greece.** From Macedonia Paul proceeded to Greece, a little land indeed but famous in history. It lies between the Aegean Sea on the east and the Ionian on the west, just south of Illyricum. Here the great apostle labored at Athens, of old a renowned city and an important seat of learning; and at Corinth, the capital of Achaia, in his time a worldly-wise, profligate city, situated on the isthmus between Hellas and the Peloponnesus.

**d. Rome.** Finally the apostle of the Gentiles visited the principal city of Italy, Rome, the "eternal city" on the banks of the Tiber, built on seven hills, at the time of Paul the capital of the world. To that city, where all nations met, where all cults were represented, and where the greatest riches and the deepest poverty were seen alongside of each other, Paul came as a prisoner; but notwithstanding this he was permitted by the grace of God to establish Christianity in that very center of the world.

## PART TWO



## SECULAR LIFE



# I. DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

---

## 1. FOOD AND ITS PREPARATION

a. **Different Kinds of Food.** Scripture informs us, Gen. 1:29, that the original food of mankind consisted of fruits and herbs, the natural products of the earth. Immediately after the deluge this was changed, when, by divine sanction, animals as well as green herbs were set aside as meat for man, the only restriction being that respecting flesh with the blood, since this represented the life of the animal and, in later times, also because of its special significance in the sacrificial ritual. As early as the time of Noah a distinction was made between clean and unclean animals, Gen. 7:2, which was later incorporated in the Levitical laws. The natural basis for this distinction lay in the despicable character of certain animals and their association with sin and death.

The staff of life among the Hebrews was bread, especially wheaten, though barley-bread was often eaten by the poor. To this were added the products of the herd, such as milk, cheese (curds) and, especially on festive occasions, meat of which mutton had the preference. After the settlement in Canaan the meals were enriched with many vegetable products, as lentils, cucumbers, beans, pomegranates, figs and grapes. Olive oil was generally spread on bread, though butter (probably cream or soured milk) was also used for that purpose. Salt was added to every meal, and spices, such as myrrh, cinnamon, calamus and cassia were very much in evidence. Mustard, anise or dill, cummin and mint were used with meats as condiments. Honey, either the natural product or the artificial honey made of grapes,

and called *dibs* by the Arabs, took the place of sugar in cookery. And fruits, such as olives, figs, grapes, almonds and pomegranates were regarded as delicacies, the best grapes being dried in the sun into raisins and then compressed into cakes. The most important beverages were water, milk and wine. The first was regarded invaluable and was not only drunk alone but also mixed with wine. It was considered one of the greatest calamities of a village or city, that its water became undrinkable. The milk of goats was preferred to every other, that of sheep being second choice. Wine was regarded as a blessing, Gen. 49: 11, 12, making glad the heart of man, Ps. 104:15, but its use was restricted because of its intoxicating character and since it took possession of the brain, Hos. 4:11. The so-called "strong drink" of which the Bible speaks may have been date-wine, or an intoxicating drink manufactured of barley.

**b. The Preparation of Food.** In the harvest time grain in its natural state was occasionally used as food, Matt. 12:1, 2. More frequently the ripening kernels were parched in a pan over the fire, or in some similar way, before they were eaten, Ruth 2:14. Ordinarily, however, the kernel was crushed in a mortar or ground in a mill, before it was converted into food, Num. 11:8. The mill in use was doubtless the simple handmill that is still extant in the Orient. It consists of two cylindrical stones, from one to two feet in diameter and about six inches thick. The lower one is stationary and provided with a convex upper surface, on which the concave under surface of the other stone revolves. The upper stone is provided with a hole in the center into which the grain is poured and through which a shaft runs that holds the stone in place; and with a handle near its outer rim by which the operator can turn it around. Women and servants were usually employed for this work. The Bible speaks of two kinds of flour, a coarser and a finer variety. The bread of the Israelites was generally

leavened by means of a piece of thoroughly seasoned dough left over from the previous day, but unleavened bread was also eaten, especially in times of great haste and at the "Feast of Unleavened Bread." It was mostly baked in the form of round flat cakes of about the width of a hand and the thickness of a finger. Baking was done in various ways, the most primitive of which was to place the prepared dough upon or underneath hot coals. Sometimes it was laid on heated stones or on a flat pan. Ovens, both portable and fixed, were in use also at an early date, the former being the most common. In most cases these were merely large pots or jars with an opening at the bottom for the fire and often another in the side for putting in the dough. This was usually plastered against the inside, occasionally also against the outer walls of the well heated oven.

Milk was often allowed to sour before it was used, a practice continued up to the present day. The butter of which the Bible speaks was most likely in a semi-fluid state, corresponding to thick cream, Job 20:17; 29:6. The Hebrews probably prepared it like the Bedouins of to-day by rocking a skin of milk upon the knees or by suspending one on a frame and then beating it or rocking it to and fro. They used it extensively in the preparation of their food and sometimes spread it on their bread. As a rule both animal and vegetable food was boiled in pots or cauldrons of various shapes and sizes. In boiling meat the cauldron was first partly filled with water or milk in which the meat was then put. Salt was always and spices were frequently added to make it savoury. Vegetable food was generally boiled in water with butter and milk. Small animals and animals taken in the chase were often roasted over an open fire. This was required in the case of the Paschal lamb, Ex. 12:7, 8. It was forbidden to seethe a kid in the milk of its mother, Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21.

**c. Customs at Table.** Orientals had but two general meals, a midday meal or dinner and an evening meal or

supper. The latter was regarded as the most important, being the meal at which the whole family gathered. From the Old Testament it appears that in very early times they sat on the ground to eat their meal just as they do to-day, Gen. 37:25; Judg. 19:6; I Sam. 20: 5, 24, etc. In later times, however, it was customary to recline on couches, Esth. 7:8; Ezek. 23:41. This was the usual attitude during the period of the New Testament. Couches generally surrounded the table on three sides, while the fourth was left open, in order that the waiters might have easy access to the table. The person who had no one at his back occupied the place of honor. Knives, forks and spoons were used only in preparing the meal and not at the table. Meat and bread was simply taken with the fingers, while thin slices of bread rolled up often served to convey liquid food to the mouth. Great emphasis was laid on washing the hands before eating, and from I Sam. 9:13; Matt. 15:36; Luke 9:16; Acts 27:35 we infer that it was customary to ask a blessing or say grace at meat.

---

## 2. CLOTHING AND ORNAMENTS

a. **Material for Clothing.** The earliest clothing provided for man by God himself was made of the skins of animals. The ordinary materials of which Oriental clothing was manufactured consisted of goat-hair, sheepskin, linen (probably a species of fine cotton), wool and silk. The Israelites were not allowed to wear clothes made of mixed materials, Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:11. Ordinarily their garments were white, though Scripture also speaks of purple, blue and scarlet clothing. Richly colored robes were worn by dignitaries and on festive occasions, Is. 3:22.

b. **Articles of Dress.** The Oriental's dress consisted especially of five parts. The first was the shirt, made of fine linen and worn next to the body. It reached to or even below the knees and often took the form of a night



shirt, except that it was made without sleeves. When wearing this shirt only, a person was regarded as naked, John 21:7. The second was the coat that was worn directly over the shirt and completed the indoor costume. It was generally made of striped and bright colored cotton, linen or woolen goods, and differed from the shirt in that it had long sleeves and its entire front was open. The two fronts were drawn around the body, overlapping each other, and the waist was firmly bound by a girdle. In this way the overlapping front also formed a ready receptacle for such things as bread for the journey, etc. The largest and heaviest article of dress was the cloak, which resembled somewhat a square shawl with arm holes and was thrown loosely over the body, often in such a manner that one shoulder and arm was bare. It was pre-eminently the dress of travel, offering protection against cold and rain and serving as a covering during the night. The girdle was another important article, bracing the hip-joints for prolonged exertion and preventing the under garments from impeding the action of the lower limbs. The scribe had his ink-horn and his case for reed pens, the shepherd his hatchet, and the warrior his sword fastened to the girdle. Originally the head-dress of the Israelites consisted of a simple bandage around the head, holding the hair together; or a cap covering both the cheekbones and the neck. In later times a turban was worn, consisting of a close-fitting cap of cotton, a similar but heavier one of felt, and the turban proper, i.e. a piece of cloth of such size and material as the owner could afford, wound about the head. The very poor generally went barefooted, but the great majority wore sandals of which some were high and pointed and others simply consisted of pieces of untanned hide, bound to the soles of the feet by latches. On entering the house the Israelite usually left his sandals at the door; if he desired to express symbolically that he ceded a certain right to another, he drew off his shoe and gave it to the party in question, Ruth 4:8; and

in claiming a certain possession (not spurning it) he would cast his shoe upon it, Ps. 60:8; 108:9. Female dress resembled the male attire very much, but was longer and of a finer quality. The distinctive female articles of dress were mantles and veils. The veil was generally, though not always, worn by women, when they appeared in public; moreover it was not necessarily used to cover the face. The interchange of dress between the sexes was strictly forbidden.

**c. Ornaments.** The most common though not the only ornaments of men were the staff and the seal-ring. The former, a long straight stick, often highly carved, was a desirable companion in the mountain passes of Palestine, and was of great value too as a weapon of defense. The seal-ring was generally worn on a finger of the right hand or around the neck, Canticles 8:6, and was often inscribed with the owner's name or with that of his father. Besides these there were the frontlets, called phylacteries in the New Testament, which were little leather cases, containing a strip of paper with such passages written on it as Deut. 6:4-9, 13-22, and attached to the forehead or to the left arm. Bracelets, necklaces and ear- and nose-rings were worn by both sexes, but especially by women. Of the ornaments peculiar to the fair sex the following deserve special mention: the caul, a band or fillet worn across the forehead to which the net was attached that retained the flowing hair; anklets, bands of gold, silver or other metal fastened to the ankles and often provided with little bells; and the ankle-chain connecting the feet and making long steps impossible, cf. Is. 3:16-24. Perfumes and pigment were also in favor among them.

---

### 3. DWELLINGS AND THEIR FURNITURE

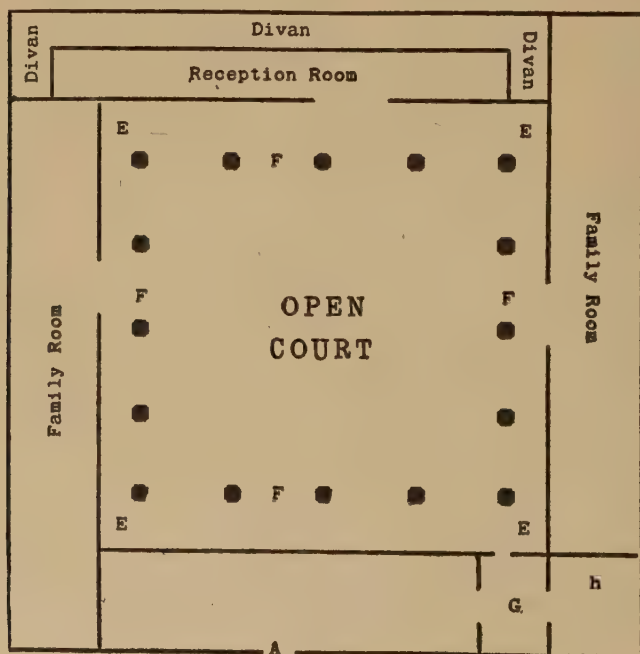
**a. Different Kinds of Dwellings.** The races of western Asia being divided into two classes, the pastoral

and the agricultural, there were naturally two kinds of dwellings, temporal and permanent. One of the most primitive dwelling-places, though it may not have been the first, was the booth, constructed of the leafy boughs of trees. Living in tents had its origin with Jabal, the son of Lamech, Gen. 4:20. The cloth for these was generally manufactured of the coarse hair of goats and camels. This being the custom still, the Arab speaks of his "house of hair." If it was of good quality, it was impervious to the rain and afforded a better protection from the scorching rays of the sun than modern tents can give. The tents were mostly rectangular but sometimes round, and contained two or three apartments, the first for the servants and the cattle, the second for the men and the visitors, and the third for the women and the children, which was also the sleeping apartment. The rich often had separate tents for their women. In Scripture the tent often occurs as an image of that which is temporary, Is. 38:12; 54:2; II Cor. 5:1.

Among the permanent dwellings we may mention first of all the cave-dwellings, such as were inhabited by the Horites. Israel never dwelt in these, but did take refuge in natural caves in times of dire distress, Judg. 6:2. The first trace of permanent dwellings is found in Gen. 4:17. Their location generally determined the materials of which they were constructed. On the plains, as in Babylon and Egypt, baked brick and mortar usually served the purpose, while in mountainous districts hewn stones were used, insuring far greater stability. The houses of the common people among the Jews had as a rule but a single story and often contained only one room, where in cold weather the cattle were also herded. Frequently the door was the only opening to admit the light, and in the absence of chimneys the smoke from the fire had to find its way through the holes in the building. This caused no great inconvenience, since Orientals spent the greater part of their time out of doors. Some of these houses had an upper room, which was often set aside for

the family, while the servants and the cattle were housed below, but in other cases was reserved for rest, secret counsel and mourning.

The dwellings of the rich were distinguished from those of the poor in that they had a large number of spacious rooms, as f.i. a separate room for the women, for sleeping, for the reception of visitors, and different apartments for winter and summer use. They were usually built around a square court, which contained a fountain and, very often, also flowers and shrubbery. Around this court was a colonnade on which the doors and windows of the lower apartments opened and which supported the piazza of the second story, if there was one. The plan of the ground floor was as follows:



The room in the rear was used for the reception of guests and contained divans stretching along two or more sides. Such houses generally had one or more upper rooms, which were considered preferable to those on the ground floor, especially during the hot summer season. In many cases the owner and his family lived up stairs, while the servants occupied the lower apartments. The doors of Oriental homes were universally small and low, except perhaps the outer one for reasons of display. They were locked by means of a bolt that was held in place by pegs which fell in corresponding holes and could be displaced from the outside only by means of a large key, provided with a similar number of pegs, and often of such a size that it was carried on the shoulder, Is. 22:22. Many of the doors were provided with knockers. The windows generally looked out upon the inner court, and consisted of simple openings, sometimes covered with slats of wood running crosswise to form a lattice. The weakest part of an eastern house was the roof: it was constructed of heavy beams laid upon the walls, over which were placed at right angles and as thickly as possible smaller strips of wood, overlaid with a layer of heather which, in turn, was covered with clay or mud to the depth of several inches, beaten and trodden down and allowed to dry in the sun. Tiles, first introduced by the Greeks, were never very common in Palestine. The law required that the roof of a house should be surrounded by a balustrade. Most houses had both an inside and an outside stairway leading to the roof.

**b. Furniture.** The furniture of an Oriental house was very simple. Bedsteads were unusual among Israel; a mattress with or without coverings was considered quite sufficient, while the poor in all probability often slept on rugs, skins or even on the bare floor. One's outer garment was one's usual covering at night; hence a garment pledged had to be returned before evening, Deut. 24:13. Chairs were never used very much by the Hebrews, though they



were very common in Egypt and Assyria. Tables of various height were in use. At first it was customary to sit (squat on mats) at the table when eating, but in later times it was more usual to recline on couches or divans, a comparatively late invention. The ordinary lamp was very simple, resembling a small saucer, with the edge projecting on one side and turned up to make place for the wick and a little olive oil. It usually burned all night, at least in the houses of the wealthy. Naturally besides these articles all sorts of culinary utensils were also found in the home.

---

#### 4. VILLAGES, TOWNS AND CITIES

The distinction between cities and villages is an old one. The city had walls, while villages were in the open. Culturally cities were superior; moreover villages often stood in a relation of dependence to them, paid them tribute and in turn received protection. Hence the Bible speaks of "a mother city," II Sam. 20:19; and of "cities and their daughters," Josh. 15:45. In the earliest period of the settlement the Israelites, as distinguished from the Canaanites, inhabited the villages. Among the cities we must distinguish between simple walled towns and fortified cities. Israel inherited many of its cities from the earlier inhabitants, as f.i. Hebron, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethel, Ai, Shechem, etc.; but it also built several itself, such as Timnath-serah, Penuel, Ramah, Samaria e.a. Other cities, among which are Pella, Dium, Gerasa, Anthedon, Apollonia and Gadara owed their origin to Greek influence. The choice of location for a city was determined first of all by the water-supply. Such names as En-gedi, En-gannim, En-shemesh e.a. point to the proximity of a spring. Another important consideration was that of adequate protection and safety. In the mountain districts cities were not built in valleys, but either on the top of elevations, as Jerusalem and Jezreël, or on the slopes of the mountains, as Hebron,



Shechem and Nazareth. The lower ends of these cities usually extended to the fountain in the valley. Owing to a desire to make the line of defense as small as possible, the Israelites did not build large cities. The houses were small, the only large structure being the fort; the streets, narrow and winding and, as a rule, unpaved and extremely dirty, since the garbage was cast upon them and dogs were the only scavengers. A peculiar kind of street was the bazaar, a sort of covered arcade with shops on either side, I Kings 20:34. In many cases persons of like trade dwelt together, Jer. 37:21; Neh. 3. For their water-supply eastern cities were dependent mostly on private wells and cisterns. The former were highly prized, but comparatively rare; the latter, mostly hewn out of the rock, narrow at the top and wide at the bottom, received the water that was conducted to it in the rainy season. At a comparatively early time water was led to Jerusalem by means of a conduit.

---

## 5. MARRIAGE

**a. The Character of Marriage.** The family originates in marriage, the union of man and wife, the very foundation of the entire social fabric. In connection with it we must distinguish between what is ideal and what was actual. The true relation of man and wife was not always realized. Marriage is a divine institution, a flower of paradise. According to its divine appointment it is the union of one man and one woman, a union of love for mutual help and for the propagation of the race. The relation thus established has a permanent character and cannot be dissolved by any legitimate act of man. It terminates at death and may be dissolved on account of adultery, Rom. 7:2, 3; Matt. 19:3-9. It symbolizes the union of Jehovah and his people, Is. 54:5; Hos. 2:19, 20; and that of Christ and his Church, Eph. 5:25-32. But man soon lost sight of the ideal. Polygamy was practiced since the days of Lamech,

Gen. 4;19, some of the patriarchs even following his evil example. The law of Moses, regulating what it found, did not forbid polygamy, but discouraged it, Lev. 18; Deut. 17:17. Concubinage was practiced by the Hebrews also. A concubine was something less than a wife, yet more than a mistress in the modern sense. The practice of concubinage arose, so it seems, from a desire to have a numerous offspring, the children thus born being perfectly legitimate. The disabilities of a concubine related to the matter of divorce, and to her own position at the death of her husband. The marriage of near relatives, very much in vogue among the Canaanites, such as that of a grandfather with his granddaughter, of an aunt with her nephew, or of a man with his brother's wife, is expressly forbidden, Lev. 18. Yet it was ordained that one should marry the wife of one's brother in case the latter died childless, to preserve his name in Israel, Deut. 25:5-10; Matt. 22:24. The first child of such a levirate marriage took the name of the deceased uncle and became heir to his property. This marriage was not compulsory, however, though it was considered a shame to refuse it. Furthermore Israelites were forbidden to intermarry with the seven Canaanitish nations, a prohibition that was extended after the exile so as to include all foreign marriages. The priests were limited still more in their choice: the common priest could marry a widow, but not an unchaste woman or one divorced; while the high priest could only choose a virgin of his own people for his companion in life.

**b. Wedding Ceremonies.** The actual marriage was preceded by betrothal, which was regarded as the legal basis of marriage and concerned chiefly the parents and near friends, though in later times the wishes of the young people in question were consulted. It was not merely a promise of marriage but its initial act, the bridegroom handing the bride, in the presence of witnesses, a piece of money with the words, "Be thou consecrated unto me." Faithless-

ness to the vow was regarded and punished as adultery, Lev. 19:20; Deut. 22:23-29. The great problem before betrothal was to fix the *mohar* or dowry, which was not considered as a price paid for the maiden, but as a present of the bridegroom to the parents or the elder brother of the bride, Gen. 24:53; 34:12. It ranged from 30 to 50 shekels, but needed not to be paid in money. The period between betrothal and marriage was generally one month for a widow and a full year for virgins, during which period there was no private intercourse between the interested parties.

The wedding was a purely family affair at which no priest or civil officer was required, though after the exile it became customary to draw up and seal a written document, Tob. 7:14. The principal act in the ceremony was that the bridegroom escorted the bride to his house. On the appointed day the bride would put on her wedding gown, deck herself with jewels, and cover her face with a veil; and the bridegroom arrayed in his best attire, accompanied by his friends, by musicians and singers, and, if it was evening, also by persons bearing torches, proceeded to the home of his betrothed. After receiving the bride, deeply veiled, from her parents, he conducted the party back to his own or to his father's house, with music and dancing. On the way they were joined by the maiden friends of the bride and groom, Matt. 25:6. A feast followed at the home of the bridegroom or of his parents, though in some cases it was spread at the abode of the bride. In the evening the bride was escorted to the nuptial chamber by her parents, and the groom by his companions. The regular festivities followed, usually lasting seven or twice seven days.

c. **The Position of Woman in Wedlock.** Several circumstances in Old Testament times tended to lower the legal and social status of the married woman, as the character of the patriarchal system, which naturally enhanced the position of man; the custom of giving dowry, easily leading to

the idea that the wife was owned by the husband; and the practice of polygamy that naturally resulted in a division and therefore also a restriction of her rights. The legal status of the woman was not so well protected by the law, as was that of her husband; and at the death of the latter she did not share in the inheritance, but was made dependent on the first-born. Her duties were manifold, but centered mainly in the household, such as drawing water, grinding flour, baking, preparing the meals, etc. Prov. 31: 10-31. The law and public opinion among Israel, however, did not suffer woman to be degraded, like she was among the surrounding gentile nations. Moreover the Israelite wife did not lead the secluded life of the modern Arabian woman. She performed a great deal of outside labor and mingled quite freely, not only with her own, but also with the opposite sex, at the city gate, at the village well, and in public processions and other celebrations. The spirit of the New Testament is still more hostile to the degradation of woman, although it insists that both man and woman shall occupy their proper spheres, as indicated by the ordinance of creation, Eph. 5: 22-33; I Tim. 2: 12-15; I Pet. 3: 1-6.

**d. Divorce.** According to the original institution marriage could be legitimately dissolved by death only. But the entrance of sin into the world brought with it the evil of divorce, which spread widely among the nations of antiquity. On account of the hardness of the people's heart the Mosaic law provided that, if a man should find some "unseemly thing" in his wife, he might write her a bill of divorcement; and that the woman was then permitted to become another man's wife. It also stipulated, however, that the first husband could not take back his wife, even if the second husband sent her away or died, Deut. 24: 1-4. By doing this it permitted, it is true, but also checked the practice of divorce. The expression, "unseemly thing," made it a mooted question among the Hebrews, when a man could legitimately put away his wife, and gave rise to

very different opinions that were voiced, in the time of our Lord, by Hillel and Shammai. Malachi stood on higher ground than the Mosaic law, when he said that God hated putting away, Mal. 2:16. Our Saviour went back to the original institution in declaring that divorce was permissible only on the ground of adultery. The right of divorce belonged to the husband only, and even he forfeited it in certain specified cases, Deut. 22:13-19, 28, 29.

---

## 6. PARENTS AND CHILDREN

a. **The Blessing of Children.** The Israelites were filled with desire for a numerous offspring. Rachel spoke to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die," Gen. 30:1; and the parting wish of Rebekah's relatives was, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions," Gen. 24:60. The position of the childless woman was hard indeed; but it was still worse for a man to be childless, since it meant the extinction of his family, a danger that was partly averted, however, by the levirate marriage. This passionate longing for the blessing of children found its explanation in a combination of desires, viz. the desire to live on in one's progeny, to have great influence in social life, to mitigate the curse resting on woman, and to give birth to the Redeemer of the world. Naturally male children were greatly preferred, since the female finally merge in other families. As soon as a child was born, it was washed in salted water and carefully bound up in a piece of cloth, and was generally, though not always, nursed by its mother, I Sam. 1:23; Ruth 4:16. For a first-born son redemption money to the amount of five shekels had to be paid, since the Lord, after sparing Israel's first-born in Egypt, claimed them as his own. On the fortieth day after the birth of a son, and on the eightieth after that of a daughter, the mother presented herself in the temple for purification and brought such a sacrifice as her means allowed, Luke 2:22-24.



**b. Different Classes of Names.** On the eighth day after birth the male children were circumcised, thus receiving the sign of the covenant. The mother usually named the child, though sometimes this was left to the father, Luke 1:60-63. There were no surnames among the Hebrews but only personal names, strictly so called. To distinguish persons of the same name that of the father was added, I Sam. 22:9; 23:6; II Sam. 20:1. The names were often derived from circumstances attending the birth of the children, or from feelings and wishes accompanying it, Gen. 29:32; 17:5, 15; 21:6; 25:25, 30. In some instances they were an expression of some physical feature, as Kareah (bald), II Kings 25:23; and Pareah (lame), Neh. 3:6. The names of animals too were often employed, either in a caritative sense, or as expressing the wish that the most characteristic attribute of the animal might be realized in the child's life, e.g. Leah (wild cow), Rachel (ewe), Jonah (dove), Deborah (bee), etc. Theophorous names also had a very important place and were an indication of the religious tendencies of those who gave them, as f.i. Eldad (God hath helped), Abijah (Jehovah is a father), Hezekiah (a strong support is Jehovah), Jerubbaal (let baal plead), Eth-baal (with baal), etc. In the New Testament the personal name is often omitted and the father's name given with *Bar* prefixed, as Bartimeus, Bartholomeus, Barjesus, etc. Circumstances in life often led to a change of names, as in the case of Gideon-Jerubbaal, Joseph-Zaphnath-paaneah, Simon-Peter.

**c. The Education of Children.** The early education of Hebrew children was entrusted to the mother, boys and girls together spending a great part of their time in her private room. This was the permanent resort of the girls until they married, but the boys were, at an early age, placed under the father's care. Occasionally special educators were employed, Num. 11:12; II Kings 10:1, 5; I Chron. 27:32; Is. 49:23. Children were taught, and indeed also showed,



the utmost respect for their parents. One who cursed his parents was to be put to death, Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9. All education had to be founded on the fear of the Lord, Prov. 9:10, and in cases of disobedience the rod was not to be spared, 13:24; 23:14. The great aim of education was to introduce the child into the parental religion; yet the necessity of teaching the boys some occupation was not overlooked. There were no schools for children until the time of Simon ben Shatach, about 70 B. C. In his time class instruction was introduced, the children being taught at first in the synagogues, and in later years often in separate schoolbuildings. The parents conducted their children to and from school, while the officiating rabbi, called *chazan*, had them in charge during school-hours. The great object of this school education was knowledge of the law, and, subsidiary to this, the study of reading and writing. Between the ages 6-10 the law was studied, from 10 to 15 the Mishnah, and from 15 to 18 the Gemarah. During the last years, the period of higher education, some study was also made of natural history, anatomy, medicine, geometry and astronomy. The method followed was that of constant repetition with the insistent demand that the pupils should remember everything just as they had learned it and should repeat it in the same way. Naturally Hebrew children, like all others, had their pastime; dolls and other playthings are even now found in the ruins of Palestine. Cf. Zech. 8:5; Matt. 11:16-18.

d. **Privileges of the First-born.** The first-born son of the father (not that of the mother, for then there might be several first-born sons in a family) had special privileges. After the death of his sire he became the head of the family, received a double portion of the inheritance, and, in the time of the patriarchs, also seems to have served as family priest, Gen. 27:29; Deut. 21:17; cf. Num. 3:41. Even the son of a concubine was eligible to these privileges. The father might for sufficient reasons assign the rights of a

first-born to a younger brother, Gen. 48:5, 6; 49:3 ff. The one having these privileges was in duty bound to provide for his mother and for other dependent members of the household, as f.i. his sisters, who received no portion of the inheritance.

---

## 7. SERVANTS

**a. Foreign Bond-servants.** The greater number of the servants among Israel were foreigners, who became slaves in one of three ways: (1) as captives of war, Num. 31:26; Deut. 20:14; (2) by being purchased of slave-traders, Lev. 25:44; or (3) by birth of parents that were already in slavery, Gen. 17:13. These slaves were, it would seem, seldom set free but enjoyed the protection of the law. If a master smote his servant, so that he died immediately, or maltreated him in such a manner that permanent injury resulted, he was punished for it, Ex. 21:20, 21, 26, 27. Even runaway slaves, coming from other countries to Israel, were not to be returned to their masters, Deut. 23:15, 16. Moreover these bond-servants were regarded as an integral part of the family, shared in the Sabbath rest, and took part in the feasts of Israel. The custom of the land even allowed the slaves greater privileges than the law required. Eliezer served as a sort of plenipotentiary for Abraham, Gen. 24:1 ff; Saul asks counsel of his boy, I Sam. 9:6; and Abigail willingly receives advice of her servant, I Sam. 25:14 ff. It was even possible that a slave should marry the daughter of his master, I Chron. 2:34, 35; and that he should be his master's heir, Gen. 15:2 ff. The deepest ground for this humane treatment is found in the fact that the slaves formed a part of the religious community, were circumcised and therefore brethren of the faith.

**b. Hebrew Servants.** The slavery of Hebrew men and women always resulted from debt. A person who was unable to meet his obligations in any other way, could enter

service with or without his family, or could sell his children in slavery. And a thief that found it impossible to make restitution of what he had stolen, was forced into servitude, Ex. 21:2 ff.; 22:2 ff.; Neh. 5:5. Naturally the position of Hebrew servants was still more favorable than that of foreign slaves. Under no circumstances might they be made bond-servants; they had to be regarded as hired servants, Lev. 25:39 f. Neither could they be sold outside of the Holy Land, although it was possible that they should become servants to foreigners living in Palestine. They were even better protected by the law than the bond-servants. Their great prerogative was that their servitude terminated, when their debt was paid by themselves or by others, or in the sabbatic year. If the slave was married on entering the service of his master, he could in the year of rest take his family with him; not so, however, in case he entered wedlock during the period of his servitude. If he chose to forego the opportunity of the sabbatic year, either for the love of his family or his attachment to his master, or because, if he went free, he would miss the necessities of life,—he was taken to the judges and next to the doorpost, where his ear was pierced with an awl in token of permanent service, Ex. 21:2-6. But in case he preferred to go free, his master might not let him go empty-handed, Deut. 15:12-17. An Israelite that was servant to a foreigner, living in Palestine, could only hope to obtain freedom by being redeemed or in the year of jubilee. This year meant freedom for *all Israelite slaves*, which seems to be implied in the restoration of each one's property, though authorities differ on the question, whether those who remained in the sabbatic year also went free in the year of jubilee.

---

## 8. SICKNESS, DEATH AND BURIAL

a. **Diseases.** "Compared with other countries of the same latitude, Palestine is, and probably was in Bible days,

a fairly healthy land." Macalister in Hastings, *Art. Medicine*. Life in the open, with destitution and want a negligible quantity and many good sanitary regulations, all had a very wholesome effect. The state of health was regarded as a great blessing; and sickness was viewed as a result of sin, particular diseases often being regarded as the result of some specific personal or parental sin, John 9:2. Besides this many ills were ascribed to the direct agency of satan. This view of sickness certainly contains an important element of truth, though Scripture does not countenance the idea that every great affliction is the result of some particular sin, or that satan is the immediate cause of our maladies. The diseases of which the Bible speaks most frequently are fevers of different kinds, leprosy, of which the tubercular or knotty and the smooth leprosy are to be distinguished. Moreover it makes mention of such diseases of the nervous system as apoplexy, paralysis and epilepsy, of acute dysentery, dropsy, scurvy and many other sicknesses.

**b. Burial.** Immediately after death entered a home the nearest relatives of the deceased closed his eyes. Next the corpse was washed, anointed and wrapped in linen, though in early times it may have been customary to clothe the dead in their usual garments, I Sam. 28:14; Is. 14:19; Ezek. 32:27. The warm climate of Palestine necessitated a speedy interment of the dead, which was the usual way to dispose of the bodies. Cremation was regarded as something shameful, Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Josh. 7:25; Amos 2:1, though it might take place to protect the dead from insult, I Sam. 31:8 ff. It was an equally great shame for one to remain unburied, Ps. 79:2, 3; Jer. 9:22; 25:33. The Hebrews did not generally follow the Egyptian custom of embalming their dead, but very often laid sweet-smelling spices in the folds of the enveloping shroud. The corpse was borne to its final resting place on a bier, or in an open casket that rested on a bier or, rarely, on a funeral car.

The order of the procession was the following: (1) the women, though they sometimes followed the bier; (2) the hired mourners; (3) the bier, of which the bearers frequently changed; (4) the chief mourners and special friends; and (5) the general company. The graves were in some cases similar to ours; in others they consisted of caves natural or artificial, which in some cases had several chambers, so that whole families were interred together. These caves were closed by large stones which either swung like a door, or were cylindrical and ran in a groove, or were merely large boulders, rolled in front of the opening. The burial-places were usually outside of the cities.

**c. Customs of Mourning.** Orientals were and are as a rule very demonstrative in the expression of both grief and joy. They expressed their sorrow symbolically by removing their ornaments and neglecting the person, by rending their clothes, shaving the head or plucking out the hair, by putting on sackcloth, sprinkling ashes or dust on the head, fasting, weeping and lamenting, Ex. 33:4; II Sam. 13:31; 14:2; 15:32; Ps. 35:13; Jer. 7:29; Joel 1:13. It was quite customary to employ hired servants, both men and women, who would lament in a methodical manner, as the occasion called for: "alas, my brother!" "alas, my sister!" or "alas, my lord," and sometimes sing dirges to the accompaniment of the flute. In some cases the tears were gathered in bottles and buried with the departed as a token of affection, Ps. 56:8. The period of fasting generally lasted 7 days, but on extraordinary occasions often extended over 30 days, Gen. 50:10. Funeral meals seem to have been known among the Jews and, at a comparatively late period, feasts were given during the days of fasting, Jos. II 1:1.



## 9. SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL INTER-COURSE

a. **Social Relations.** The Jews were and Orientals generally are very sociable people. This sociability was enhanced by the political constitution and by the religious ceremonies of the Hebrews. There were no castes among them, nor even sharply defined classes that kept aloof. The social inequality of the present day was not known, since the law offered a safeguard against excessive wealth, as well as against extreme poverty. The brotherly relation of the people to each other and the duties resulting from this, were made very prominent. Moreover men and women moved on a common plane in Israel far more than they did among other nations, and the sexes mixed in daily life with a freedom that was unknown elsewhere. The people of the village met at the fountain and those of the city at the gate to hear and discuss the latest news, Gen. 19:1; 34:20; Ps. 69:12. The religious festivals at the sanctuary also fostered the spirit of brotherhood among the people in general, as did on a lesser scale such feasts as "the day of the king" (of his accession), Hosea 7:5; the feast of sheep-shearing, I Sam. 25:2 f. etc.

b. **Hospitality.** The sociability of the Hebrews found expression especially in their hospitality. The Bedouin of to-day places a high value on property, just because it enables him to be hospitable. He would not break the laws of hospitality even if his mortal enemy sought shelter in his tent. Jael's deed was, no doubt, exceptionable, Judg. 4:17 ff, for among Israel too it was only honorable to welcome strangers to one's home, Gen. 19:2; Ex. 2:20; Job 31:32; Heb. 13:2. As soon as visitors entered, water was brought to wash their feet, Gen. 18:4; 19:22, and a meal was prepared for them, Gen. 18:7, 8. The host himself often waited on honored guests, and did not deem it proper to inquire as to their name until they had eaten,



Gen. 24:33. In the absence of public inns this hospitality had great value, especially when the great feasts brought the Jews in large numbers to Jerusalem.

**c. Family Feasts.** The family feasts too testified to the sociable character of the Hebrews. There were several private festive occasions, such as the day on which a child was born and that on which it was circumcised, the time of its weaning, wedding days, etc. Such feasts were on the whole very simple, a sheep, kid, calf or other animal of the flock being prepared and served with wine. It was not a great variety but a sufficient quantity of food that was essential to a rich repast. Giving one a double or a five-fold portion was indicative of great honor, Gen. 43:34; I Sam. 1:5; 9:24. The guests were entertained with stories, songs and especially riddles, Judg. 14:12. In later time these feasts became more elaborate, the meal being spiced with music, song and dancing, Job 21:12; Is. 5:11, 12; Amos 6:5 ff. Slaves introduced the guests, washed their feet, and anointed head, beard and clothes with precious oil. The prophets denounced these festivities on account of their extravagance, Is. 1; Amos 6.

**d. Courtesy.** The formalities of social life were characterized by gracefulness and generosity. The most ordinary greeting was, "peace to thee," Judg. 19:20; I Chron. 12:18, or, "the Lord be with you," to which the rejoinder often came, "the Lord bless you," Ruth 2:4. These greetings were in many cases accompanied with several fixed inquiries to show respect and interest. Since this caused no little delay, our Saviour commanded the seventy to salute no man by the way. The accompanying movements of the body also required considerable time. Ordinarily a person would place the right hand on the left breast and bow low, though sometimes he would pass through a whole series of movements. On meeting dignitaries or other persons of high station, it was customary to get down on the knees, touch the earth with the forehead, and even kiss the feet of the

person in question. One riding on a horse or camel generally dismounted on such occasions. The more important party was usually addressed as Adoni (my lord), Gen. 18: 12, while the other party would speak of himself in the third person as "thy servant," Gen. 33: 5, I Sam. 24: 14. In buying and selling there was always an effort to say nothing that might offend. A standing phrase of the seller was, "Take it freely; I give it to thee!" The more frequently he repeated it, the greater was the price which he intended to ask.

---

## 10. OCCUPATIONS

**a. Fishing and Hunting.** Hunting, in many Oriental lands the favorite sport even of kings, was a necessity rather than a pastime in the Holy Land, though some of the Hebrews loved the chase. Certain parts of Palestine abounded with bears and lions, panthers and jackals, wolves and foxes, etc., very desirable game for the huntsman; but the humane character of the law was at variance with the brutalities of the sport, Deut. 22: 6. The usual weapons were bow and arrow, while snares were often set and pitfalls constructed. Dogs may have been employed in the chase, Prov. 30: 31, but there is no trace in Scripture of trained falcons. The figurative language of such passages as Ecc. 9: 12; Jer. 16: 16; Ezek. 29: 4, etc. prove that fishing was not unknown among Israel; it was limited, however, to the sea of Galilee and the River Jordan. The Bible speaks of large fish, but contains no evidence that the Hebrews were ever engaged in catching them, Ps. 104: 26. They might freely eat all the fish that had fins and scales, Lev. 11: 9, and generally did their fishing at night, often using large dragnets, but also the hook and line, the trident and spear, Job 41: 1, 7; Is. 19: 8.

**b. Cattle-Rearing.** Far more important than either hunting or fishing was the rearing of sheep, goats and cattle.

The earliest occupation of Israel was pastoral; hence the Hebrew word signifying property really denotes property consisting of cattle. Sheep were the all important domestic animals of Palestine, the most common being the broad-tailed species. Their color was usually white, but sometimes black or speckled, and each individual sheep had its distinctive name. They were frequently brought upon the altar; their meat was the regular animal food; and their wool was valuable for clothing. The annual sheep-shearing was a festive occasion, I Sam. 25:2 ff.; II Sam. 13:23. Goats were also numerous in the Holy Land, but they were not pastured in a flock with the sheep, neither were they gathered into the same fold. The milk of goats was used extensively for food, and their black hair for making tent-cloth and the coarser garments of the Israelites. The flocks of sheep and goats were generally watched by shepherds, who led them out in the morning, watched them during the day, often with the aid of a dog, and guided them back to the fold at night. The shepherd called his sheep by name, and in the evening caused them to pass under the rod, in order to see if any were missing. His task was a responsible one: he had to restore every sheep or goat that was stolen, lost or devoured, Gen. 31:39, a requirement that was mitigated somewhat by the law, Ex. 22:9 ff. No wonder therefore that his outfit included not only a bag or wallet and a staff, but also a knife, a sling, and a cudgel.

Cattle were highly prized by the Hebrews, but not divinely honored as in Egypt. Cows and oxen were employed especially in breaking up the soil, and further in treading out grain, drawing carts, etc. The cows supplied milk and butter and their flesh was, to a limited extent, consumed as food. Horses were rare, but since the days of David and Solomon they were introduced, especially for purposes of war, though also for riding. They were neither shod nor provided with saddles when traveling. The camel of the Bible is the dromedary or Arabian camel, differing from

the Bactrian in that it has but one hump. Since Palestine is a mountainous country, it was of no great value there; yet it was used both for riding and as a pack animal, Gen. 12:16; 24:10; 30:43; Job 1:3; 42:12. Rearing of mules was forbidden, Lev. 19:19, and, though Israel made extensive use of them, the Bible contains no proof that it transgressed this commandment. They were employed as pack animals and especially for riding, II Sam. 18:9; I Kings 1:33. The ass was one of the best known and most useful of animals in Palestine. It was domesticated very early, though it existed in all periods in a wild state. In speed and endurance it surpassed the horse, and in distinction from this and the mule it was the animal for times and scenes of peace, Zech. 9:9.

**c. Agriculture.** Agriculture was one of the earliest pursuits of man. In Egypt Israel became acquainted with the highly developed tillage of that country, Deut. 11:10, and after it entered Canaan, it devoted itself primarily to the cultivation of the soil. Each family had its own parcel of land, which might be alienated only for a limited period. Estates were measured by yokes, i. e. portions such as a yoke of oxen could plow in a day. The land differed in value according to its yield in grain, the Hauran far surpassing the Plain of Sharon and that of Esdraelon. Parts of Palestine were irrigated, but the land depended for its moisture chiefly on the heavy dew and on the rains of the rainy season. The ground was fertilized with the ashes of burnt straw and stubble with the chaff left after threshing, and by the direct application of dung. Moreover the natural fertility of the land was heightened by letting it lie fallow every seventh year. Whatever grew spontaneously in that year was not for the owner only, but also for the poor, for strangers and for the cattle, Lev. 25:1-7. In the history of Israel the law of the sabbatic year was not always observed, II Chron. 36:20, 21.

The grains most widely cultivated in Palestine were wheat

and barley, while spelt and millet or German wheat besides fitches and cummin were also raised, Ex. 9:32; Is. 28:25, 27; Ezek. 4:9. Of the plants producing pods beans and lentils were the most usual. The husbandman was largely dependent on the natural order of the seasons, the rainy season being used for the cultivation of the soil, and the dry season for harvesting the crops. The land was plowed with a very simple plow, consisting of a wooden frame provided with a handle on one end and furnished on the other with a blade or share of iron, which could in some instances be removed. To the lower part of the frame a knee-shaped stake was attached with a cross-bar to which the yoke was fastened. The plow was drawn by oxen, cows or asses, the law forbidding, however, that an ass should be yoked with any one of the other two, Deut. 22:10. The goad, a long heavy stick, was used to urge the animals on in their work. Unbroken land was first cleared of stones and bushes and then plowed more than once. It was not customary to plow deeper than four or five inches. While plowing was begun before the rainy season, sowing sometimes preceded but usually followed it. On some occasions the clods were broken up by a person following the plowman; a sort of harrow too was often employed. The beginning of the harvest was signalized by bringing a sheaf of the new grain to the sanctuary on the 16th of Nisan. Both in Egypt and Palestine the grain was generally cut with a sickle, but sometimes pulled up by the roots. The reaper left the grain in little heaps behind him, and afterwards bound it in sheaves which were set up together. The corners of the field were left unreaped for the gleanings of the poor, Lev. 19:9; cf. Ruth 2:2 ff. Reaping was soon followed by threshing, which was generally done in the open on an area of 50 or more feet in diameter. The heavier grain was sometimes beaten out with sticks; this was the usual process in the case of fitches and cummin. An early method of threshing was to drive cattle over the grain, often several yoked



abreast. With a view to this practice the law stipulated that Israel should not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the grain, Deut. 25:4. At a later period a threshing-sledge was employed, consisting of a frame with two or three cylinders fitted into it, of which each one had iron projections in the form of wheels so arranged that the whole space under the machine was covered. Threshing, again, was immediately followed by winnowing, for which a shovel (probably a sort of pitchfork with several tines) and a fan, i. e. a wooden shovel with a long handle, were employed. The grain was thrown up in the air and the wind carried off the chaff as it came down. The owner often remained near his grain during the night, Ruth 3:2, 4.

**d. Wine and Olive Culture.** The vineyard held a very important place in Palestine. It was generally surrounded by a ditch and a fence or wall to protect it from foxes, jackals and other destroyers. Moreover it was provided with a tower for the watchman, and with a winepress, consisting of an upper and a lower vat, the upper one built above the ground or excavated in the rock, having one or more holes in the bottom through which the juice escaped into the lower vat, Is. 5:2. Men were wont to tread out the grapes with the naked feet, after which the juice was put into jars or bottles made of goatskins and allowed to ferment. The Arabs often make a syrup of grapes which they call *dibs*. The vineyard was frequently planted on a hillside or peak, and the vines were usually allowed to spread over the ground, though sometimes trellises served to support them. Olive trees grew wild in western Asia, but when cultivated were improved by grafting branches of the noble olive upon them. The process to which Paul refers in Rom. 11:17, 24 was just the reverse of this. The fruit ripened about September or October and was then shaken from or beaten off the tree, Deut. 24:20. It was customary to reserve the finer olives for pickling, while oil was made of the remainder. This was done by means of the olive-



press, constructed of a platform of masonry on which a large circular stone was placed, hollowed out in the form of a pan. The olives put into this were crushed by means of another stone, of about the size of a grindstone, set on edge and moved about by a pole through the center, the oil flowing out through a hole in the side of the vat. After this process the pulp was put in bags and subjected to still further pressure by the feet. Earthen jars or skins were the receptacles of the olive-oil. Gardens were quite common in Palestine, especially with the higher ranks of society.

**e. Industries.** At first every Israelite made the necessary clothing, utensils, etc. himself, so that no separate trades could develop. This gradually changed, however, and a very different condition obtained after the exile, when the rabbis insisted that every male Israelite should learn a trade. Among the wood-workers Scripture mentions carpenters, cabinet-makers, carvers, wagon-makers, etc. The so-called constructors prepared everything that was necessary for the building of a house and brought it to completion; but in later times the work was divided between stone-hewers, masons and carpenters. These often resided together in certain sections or cities of the land, traveling from place to place to do their work.

Working in metals began with Tubal-cain. The principal metals used in Palestine were iron, copper (usually changed to brass by adding zinc, or to bronze by mixing it with tin), silver and gold. The process of separating metals from their alloys was to some degree understood. Scripture speaks of workers in iron and brass and of gold- and silver-smiths. The latter would go from house to house and make before the very eyes of their customers what they desired. Mention is also made in the Bible of engravers, apothecaries, perfumers, bakers, tanners, fullers, weavers and potters. Spinning and weaving was done by the women. The looms were originally very primitive, but superior ones were introduced in Egypt two centuries before the exile, and may

also have come into use in the land of the Hebrews. It was forbidden to weave wool and linen into the same texture, Lev. 19:19. Skilful artisans often weaved flowers into the cloth and also wove garments of one piece. The fuller made the cloth waterproof by placing it in a solution of water and alkali, beating, washing and finally drying it. More frequently than the fuller the potter is mentioned in Scripture, who first trod the clay and then shaped it on a wheel that was made to turn by the feet. Pottery was often glazed or enameled and then hardened in a furnace. Among the Hebrews work was generally regarded as honorable, but gradually some trades came to be more or less despised, as f. i. that of the tanner and that of the fuller, who could only ply their trade on the outskirts of the city, Acts 10:6.

---

## 11. TRADE AND COMMERCE

a. **Commercial Relations.** The Hebrew word for trader shows that among the Israelites he was originally a traveling salesman. From the earliest times there was a limited domestic trade in Palestine, but neither the position of the land nor the law favored Israel's becoming a commercial people. Previous to David's time their trade was mostly confined to the exchange of the products of the land among themselves. In the days of Solomon it reached its greatest height, when Israel had commercial relations with Arabia, Egypt, Ophir and the lands east of the Euphrates. The division of the kingdom put an end to this extensive trade, and when Jehoshaphat aspired after it once more in league with the king of Israel, he failed in the attempt. The Phoenicians, however, were still supplied with such natural products as wheat, oil and honey in exchange for skilled labor and its fruits. Their traders traversed the country as peddlers and erected markets for the wares in the principal towns of Palestine. The name *merchant* finally became synonymous with *Canaanite*, Prov. 31:24, margin of

R. V. In the time of Nehemiah these traders grew numerous and defiant, so that the governor had to resort to harsh measures against them, Neh. 13:16. Even after the exile the Jews of Palestine were no great traders, Josephus writing, "we do not delight in merchandise." It was quite different, however, with the Jews of the dispersion both in and after the exile. Their condition and environment were favorable to commercial life, especially since the time of Alexander the Great. There always was considerable trade passing through the Holy Land, because some of the main commercial roads traversed it. The south road extended from Gaza by way of Petra and Dumah to the Persian Gulf; the western thoroughfare along the coast connected Egypt with Phoenicia and Syria; the northern route extended from the Phoenician ports to Damascus, Palmyra and the Euphrates; and the eastern highway along the east side of the Jordan was the road from Arabia and the Elanitic Gulf to Damascus.

**b. Measures.** The Israelite measures of length were mostly derived from parts of the human body, as:

- (1) the finger's breadth;
- (2) the handbreadth;
- (3) the span, i. e. the distance between the end of the thumb and that of the little finger, when the hand is extended; and
- (4) the cubit, generally taken as the distance between the end of the middle finger and the elbow.

Besides these there were:

- (1) the fathom, from six to six and a half feet; and
- (2) the reed, used especially for building purposes, of the length of six cubits.

It is rather uncertain, whether Israel derived these measures from the Egyptians or from the Babylonians. Both of these peoples had besides the common also a royal cubit, being a handbreadth longer than the other. This is probably the measure to which Ezekiel refers, 40:5; 43:13.

Measures of distance in the Old Testament are, *the pace*, "*some way*," Gen. 35:16, and *a day's journey*. The first nearly corresponded to our yard; the second is still uncertain, though fixed by tradition at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles; and the last differed with the nations, the Persians defining it as a journey of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 10 hours, the Romans, as one of 8 hours. The Sabbath day's journey was fixed by the rabbis at 2000 paces or about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  English miles. The only square measure in the Bible is the yoke, i. e. a piece of land which a yoke of oxen could plow in a day.

The Israelitish system of capacity measures was of a mixed character, partaking of both a sexagesimal and a decimal system. With respect to these also the question is debatable, whether they were derived from Egypt or from Babylon. The unit for dry substances was the ephah and for liquids the bath, the two being of equal capacity and containing a trifle more than 3 pecks, 5 quarts U. S. dry measure, or 8 gallons, 1 quart,  $1\frac{2}{3}$  pints U. S. wine measure. The names of the dry measures and their relation to the ephah is as follows:

6 kabs	equal	1 seah.
3 seahs	or {	equal 1 ephah.
10 omers	}	
10 ephahs	equal	1 homer.

The following are the liquid measures and their relation to the bath:

12 logs	or {	equal 1 hin
6 cabs	}	
6 hins	equal	1 bath.
10 baths	equal	1 homer or cor.

**c. Weights.** Of the weights used among Israel very little is known. The standard weight was the shekel, equivalent to 252.621 grains avoirdupois or about  $\frac{3}{5}$  of an ounce. The shekel was equivalent to 20 gerahs, and a maneh con-

tained either 50 or 60 shekels, the interpretation of Ezek. 45:12 being rather uncertain. From Ex. 38:25, 26 it follows that the talent equalled 3000 shekels. The following table gives the relative weight:

10 gerahs equal 1 bekah.

2 bekahs equal 1 shekel, about 252 grains.

50 (or 60) shekels equal 1 maneh, a little more than 2 lbs.

60 manehs equal 1 talent, about 129 lbs.

The "king's weight," mentioned in II Sam. 14:26 probably refers to the official weight, and the expression *ebhen hammelekh* leads to the conclusion that stones were used as weight. Bronze and stone weights were in fact found, having the forms of lions and ducks and some of them furnished with handles. Among Israel the weights were tested, and their law gives repeated warning against falsifying them. Hebrew merchants carried instruments for weighing with them, which often consisted of a standard on which a beam rested, having scales on either end.

**d. Money.** Hebrew coins and weights were named alike, which was due to the fact that, at first, money was not coined but weighed. It is quite certain, however, that Orientals gave their metal that was used for money certain particular forms. Achan found among the spoils of Jericho a golden tongue of 50 shekels in weight, Josh. 7:21; and pieces appearing on Egyptian monuments have the form of rings. It is significant in this connection that the Hebrew word for talent also means ring. Scripture does not speak of counterfeiting, but it does make mention of falsifying the weight of money, Lev. 19:36. Before the exile the following denominations were in use: the gerah, the bekah, the shekel, the maneh and the talent. The Hebrews had both a gold and a silver standard, the relative value of which is a matter of dispute. Opinions differ also as to the value of the shekel and that of the gold maneh, some making it equal to 100 shekels, others to 60. After the exile coined

money began to circulate in Palestine, the Persian daric first coming into use, which was soon followed by the Greek lepton, drachma and talent, and later also by the Roman quadrans, assarion, denarius, drachma and stater. In the time of Simon the Maccabee the Jews were authorized to coin money. The following tables show the relative value of the denominations:

**Table of Silver**

Name	Value in Dollars and Cents
1 gerah .....	0 03.65
10 gerahs 1 bekah .....	0 36.5
2 bekahs 1 shekel .....	0 73
60 shekels 1 maneh .....	43 80
50 manehs 1 talent .....	2190 00

**Table of Gold**

1 shekel .....	5 35
100 shekels 1 maneh .....	535 00
100 manehs 1 talent .....	53500 00

**Tables of Greek and Roman Money**

Name	Value in Cents
1 lepton .....	00.12
2 leptons 1 quadrans (rendered farthing Matt. 5:26; Mark 12:42) .....	00.24
4 quadrantes 1 assarion (rendered farthing Matt. 10:29; Luke 12:6) .....	00.96
1 denarius (penny) 1 drachma .....	18.3
2 denarii ( $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel) 1 didrachma .....	36.6
2 didrachma (shekel) 1 tetradrachma .....	73.2

## 12. SCIENCES AND ARTS

a. Character of the Sciences. There was no scientific



study in the modern sense among the Jews. Their knowledge was not unified and above all practical. The law was the first object of study. Its special devotees were, in pre-exilic times the priests, and after the exile, the scribes whose principal seat was first in Judea and after the destruction of Jerusalem in Tiberias and Jabne. The fruits of their study were finally laid down in the Talmud. Alongside of the study of the law the Chokmah was developed which was the Hebrew counterpart of the philosophy of other nations, but had a distinctive character in that it was not only based on the revelation of God in nature and in the life of man with all its vicissitudes, but also started from certain presuppositions that were derived from the special revelation of God. Its object was to harmonize the truths of experience with revealed religion by finding the wisdom of God in life, which was possible only where the fear of God controlled the heart. It culminated in the discovery of Wisdom personified, Prov. 8. The Hebrew historians were usually prophetic men who wrote history, not for its own sake, but with a practical purpose. Their narratives are objective in that they do not pervert the truth to make it serve their subjective end; at the same time history is treated by them in a pragmatic way, containing many interspersed paranetic passages. They never lost sight of the fact that it too is a part of God's revelation.

Astronomy did not attain to the position of a science among Israel. The knowledge which the Hebrews had of the heavenly bodies was very imperfect and they made no attempt to systematize it. Sun and moon were distinguished from each other and from the stars, but no distinction was made between stars and planets. Together they are designated in Scripture as "the host of heaven," while some of the stars and constellations are named separately, as e. g. Venus, "the morning star," Is. 14:12; the Pleiades, Job 9:9; 38:31; Orion, the Great Bear (Arcturus) and the Serpent, Job 26:13; 38:32. The knowledge of the Israel-

ites respecting the structure of the earth was primitive, but surpassed that of other nations. It is absolutely wrong to interpret the highly poetical language of the Old Testament as a literal expression of the cosmogony of the Hebrews (Benzinger and Visser), thus making the Biblical representations chiefly mythological.

Disease and death were looked upon as direct afflictions sent by God, but this did not prevent the Israelites from seeking to stay the ravages of disease. The Bible speaks of physicians repeatedly and also of midwifery, Ex. 1. In early times the work of physicians consisted mainly in applying remedies externally; these were all of a vegetable character, such as balm and oil, plasters and salve. Bleeding was often resorted to and the hot baths of Calirrhoe and Tiberias were eagerly sought.

**b. The Division of Time.** The division of time among the Hebrews was determined by the heavenly bodies, —especially by the moon.

(1) **The Day.** Owing to the fact that the crescent moon does not appear till after sunset, the day began in the evening and extended to the evening of the following day. This reckoning is not followed, however, in the narrative of creation, the days of Gen. 1 being from morning to morning. Besides this there is some evidence that the Jews knew the solar day as well as the lunar and occasionally followed it in the determination of time. Lev. 23:32 explicitly states that the day referred to is to be from even to even, implying that other days were known. And the evening which began the fifteenth of Nisan is designated by the expression, "the fourteenth day at even," Ex. 12:18. The natural day, from sunrise to sunset, was simply divided into morning, noon and evening; the night into three watches, the first, Lam. 2:19; the middle, Judg. 7:19; and the third, Ex. 14:24, while in later times a fourfold division was borrowed from the Romans. In the pre-exilic period the days were ordinarily simply numbered, only the Sabbath and later

Friday also (the Day of Preparation) having a special name. The division of the day in hours, minutes and seconds was not known to ancient Israel, though the New Testament makes mention of hours, Matt. 27:45; John 4:6, 52. This merely goes to show, however, that they were then acquainted with a twelve-fold division of the day, such as was known from early times in Egypt; not that the hours, as we know them, were used in computing time. Their hours varied in length with the different length of the days.

(2) **The Week.** The next division of time was the week of seven days, corresponding roughly to the phases of the moon. The division of time into periods consisting of seven units is a very ancient one and is often mentioned in Scripture. We find it first of all in the creation narrative; then in the story of the flood; next in the transactions of Laban with Jacob; and also in the Mosaic law. The Assyrians and Babylonians knew the seven-day week, and the Hebrews may have derived their week from the Babylonians. However this may be, it is safe to maintain that the week is an original institution, which began with the beginning of human history.

(3) **The Month.** The length of the month was determined by the course of the moon. Hence the Hebrew names for moon, new moon and month were the same. These lunar months had alternately 29 and 30 days, so that the year ordinarily consisted of 354 days. To adjust the discrepancy between the lunar and the solar year, it was customary to add a thirteenth month about every third year, called Ve-Adar. This was never done, however, in a sabbatic year. Before the exile the months were usually designated by their number, though four of their names are already found in early literature, viz. Abib, Ex. 13:4; Zif, 1 Kings 6:1; Bul, 6:38; and Ethanim, 8:2. In post-exilic writings both the number and the name is generally given.

(4) **The Year.** According to the Mosaic law the month Abib was to be "the beginning of months," Ex. 12:2,

comp. 13:4. It is probable, however that, from the period of the exodus, another mode of reckoning was also followed in which the autumn was considered as the beginning of the year, a very natural reckoning for agricultural people. Cf. Ex. 23:16. After the exile the first of Tishri, the seventh month, was celebrated as New Year's day. Probably at that time this month began the civil, while Abib marked the beginning of the ecclesiastical year. The names of the months were in all probability of Babylonian origin.

c. **Writing and Writing Materials.** It is no longer a subject of dispute that Israel at the time of the exodus understood the art of alphabetical writing. And although we have no positive evidence that it was practiced before that time, this is by no means unlikely. The art is not represented as something new in the time of Moses: Judah had a seal-ring, which may have had writing upon it; the ability to write is presupposed on the part of the priests, and also on the part of the people, Deut. 6:9; 11:20; and in the book of Judges we already meet with a young man of the people who was able to write the names of the princes and elders of Succoth, 8:14. The question is still debated, whether alphabetical writing had an Egyptian, a Babylonian or a Phoenician origin. If, as Benzinger thinks, it was derived from the Babylonians, Abraham may have been acquainted with it. In course of time the original Hebrew characters were supplanted by the Aramaic. The earliest Hebrew inscription of which we have any knowledge is the Siloa-inscription, dating from the time of Hezekiah; but the writing of the Moabite stone of the time of Ahab is very similar to the Hebrew.

The writing materials too may have been derived from either Egypt or Babylon. Although the reed pen was most commonly used, a stylus or pen of iron was employed for writing on wood or metal. Professional writers generally carried a small quantity of ink and also a supply of pens in receptacles attached to the girdle. They also had a pen-

## CALENDAR

Name of Month	Approximation	Season	Festivals and Fasts
1 Abib or Nisan	April	Latter Rain	14 Passover
			15-21 Feast of Unleavened Bread
			16 Sheaf of barley presented
2 Zif or Iyar	May	Dry Season	14 Second Passover
3 Sivan	June		6 Pentecost
4 Tammuz	July		9 Fast; capture of Jerusalem
5 Ab	Aug.		7 Fast; destruction of Temple
6 Elul	Sept.	Former Rain	
7 Ethanim or Tishri	Oct.		1 Feast of Trumpets
			3 Fast; murder of Gedaliah
			10 Day of Atonement
			15-21 Feast of Tabernacles
			22 Solemn Assembly
8 Bul or Marchesvan	Nov.	Rainy Season	
9 Chisleu	Dec.		25 Feast of Dedication
10 Tebeth	Jan.		10 Fast; siege of Jerusalem begun
11 Shebat	Feb.		
12 Adar	March		14, 15 Feast of Purim
13 Ve-Adar			



knife handy to keep the pen in order and to cut the material on which the writing was done. From the inscriptions laid bare in the past century we may infer that stone and clay were probably the earliest of these materials. Wooden tablets were largely used in many countries, often covered with wax. Probably Is. 30:2; Hab. 2:2 and Luke 1:63 refer to such tablets. Prepared skins may have played an important part in early Hebrew literature, but parchment was not invented until the time of the Ptolomies. The papyrus plant, that was formerly found in great abundance in Egypt, was used from a very early date as material for writing in the land of the Nile, from where its use spread into the neighboring countries. The paper manufactured from this plant is mentioned but once in the Bible, viz. in II John 12. The early form of books was that of the roll, the papyrus or parchment being cut into long stripes that were fastened together and then rolled on two rolls provided with handles.

**d. Architecture, Sculpture and Painting.** The Hebrews were poor in works of art. With the sole possible exception of excavating or tunneling, be it for graves or for conduits, not a single art was peculiar to Israel. There was little of architecture, the houses of the Jews being as a rule very simple. The only important architectural works of which the Bible contains a description, are the temple of Solomon and the royal palace built by that king. The material used in the construction of these buildings consisted of large polished stones, cedarwood of Lebanon and precious metals in great abundance. Since the main builders were Phoenicians, it is but natural that the architecture should be marked by Phoenician influence. The royal palace consisted of five parts: (1) the House of the Forest of Lebanon; (2) the Porch of Pillars; (3) the Porch of the Throne; (4) the House of Pharaoh's daughter; and (5) the Private Palace of the King. Since the time of Herod the Great the Greek-Roman style was gradually introduced



in Palestine, which also marked the temple built by Herod.

The ancient graves, of which many are still found round about Jerusalem, were peculiar. Originally natural or artificial caves served as burial places, but alongside of these there were also simple cavities dug out of the earth. Four kinds of graves were known: (1) Recess graves, that were about six feet long by one and a half square and hewn lengthwise into the wall of the chamber: (2) Sunken graves like those used in the Occident, but covered with stone; (3) Bench-graves, made bench-like in the walls of the chamber, 22 inches high and often arch-roofed; (4) Trough-graves, being a combination of (2) and (3). The opening of a grave was usually closed by large and often round stones, which in some cases ran in grooves. In the days of our Lord the graves were whitened at least once a year to prevent the contamination of the people. Whole families often rested together in the same chamber. Besides the building of graves Israel also understood the construction of conduits. These were in fact open gutters, either of mason-work or hewn out of the rock, that were made to wind with many turns along the side of the mountains. The most famous of these is the Siloah-tunnel, partly built through one of the mountains, along which the water is carried to Jerusalem. The slope of this channel is almost imperceptible.

In sculpture the Jews were far behind the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and the Phoenicians. Their images are crude as compared with those of other nations. It was not otherwise with painting. The Hebrews really knew but four colors abstractly, viz. red, green, white and black, the only colors for which the Hebrew language has separate words. This paucity was remedied somewhat by naming certain objects from which a particular color was derived instead of the color itself.

**e. Poetry and Music.** The poetry of Israel is subjective and sententious. The more objective poetry, such as the epic and the dramatic is not found in their literature,

though there are dramatic elements in Job and Canticles. The lyric predominates, but the didactic also occupies an important place, and there is a great deal of gnomic poetry, such as the fable, the proverb and the parable. Hebrew poetry is rhythmic, but the verse is not based on meter or on rhyme. Its chief characteristic is parallelism, of which there are four kinds, the synonymous, the antithetic, the synthetic and the inverted.

Song and Music were loved very much among Israel. The shepherd in the field, as well as the children in the gate or by the well filled the air with music, while both bridal processions and funeral trains were accompanied by joyous or plaintive notes. Yet the singing was very simple and often crude; it was chanting rather than singing. The temple-choir probably sang different parts, such as soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Moreover responsive and antiphonal singing gave it some variety. Usually the singing was accompanied by instrumental music. There were especially three sorts of instruments: (1) stringed instruments, viz. the harp, the psaltery and the sackbut; (2) wind instruments, such as the flute, the pipe and the trumpet; and (3) instruments beaten or shaken, as the timbrel, castanets and cymbals.

---

## II. CIVIL RELATIONS

---

### 1. THE PEOPLE AND ITS GOVERNMENT

a. **The Natural Formation of Israel as a People.** A nation and its country ordinarily go together, but the tribe, which is the unit in nomadic life, is not necessarily connected with any land. The tribes of Israel were founded by the sons of Jacob that were twelve in number. At the division of the land, however, no separate inheritance was given to Levi, but Joseph received a double portion, Ephraim and Manasseh each forming a distinct tribe, Josh. 14:3, 4;

16: 1, 4. It is impossible to maintain that all those belonging to a tribe descended from the tribal father. Various strange elements were assimilated from time to time, such as foreign slaves, Hebrew servants that were set free but decided to remain as clients of their masters, clans that lost their original connection, and weak families in search of protection, cf. Gen. 15: 19; Num. 32: 12; Josh. 15: 17; Judg. 1: 16; 4: 11. Each tribe consisted of several clans, divided into father's houses, which in turn were subdivided into men i. e. fathers with wife and children. Roughly speaking, the tribes were formed by the twelve sons of Jacob, the clans by Jacob's grandchildren, and the families or father's houses by his great-grandchildren; but cf. Num. 26. The fathers who by right of birth stood at the head of tribes or portions of tribes were called princes, while for those who had the primacy in a smaller subdivision the name *head* was more common. Israel's settlement in Canaan profoundly modified the old tribal organization, since the nations of the land that were culturally superior to Israel made a lasting impression on it.

**b. The Institution of the Elders.** The elders of the people were in the main, if not entirely, identical with the heads of the tribes, clans and families. They were the representatives of the people, yet aristocratic rather than democratic, since their position depended, not on the choice of their constituency, but on birth. The greater part of public business was transacted by the elders; and all new officials were selected from their number, as f. i. the seventy who were appointed by Moses in the wilderness to be "rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens," and "to judge the people at all seasons." Although this arrangement was merely temporary, resulting from the exigencies of the time, it is clear that in later history the elders not only served as national representatives, but also as local rulers, judges and magistrates. In the troublous times following the demise of Joshua the elders

remained the real rulers of the people, while the judges, raised up by God as special deliverers in periods of distress, formed no essential part of Israel's system of government. All through the periods of the kingdom, of the exile and of foreign domination the elders retained a certain degree of authority.

**c. The Theocracy.** At Sinai the tribes of Israel were constituted a nation. The particular form of government established there was theocratic, God being Israel's special King and Israel, the peculiar people of the Lord. Jehovah ruled this people, in distinction from other nations, directly, i. e. without the mediation of man. He promulgated the laws that were to govern their civil, moral and religious life. And in all important cases He reserved judgment for himself, delivering it by means of Urim and Thummim. Unlike other kings, He ruled not only the external destinies of the people but also their internal life. God's will was Israel's law in every sphere of activity. Moreover He passed judgment not only on man's deeds but also on his motives, regarding both from the point of view of sin and holiness. Naturally the operation of the theocratic institutions depended somewhat on local earthly conditions and on the external means employed to lead the people to a knowledge of God and of his sovereign will. This in connection with the sinful condition of Israel constituted the weakness of the Theocracy and resulted in the nation's failure, recorded in the book of Judges.

**d. The Earthly King.** In Gen. 17:16; 49:10 it is already intimated that kings would arise among the Hebrews; and the law of the king in Deut. 17:14-20 also clearly looks forward to such a condition of things.

In harmony with the nature of the Theocracy the law made it imperative that the future earthly king should be of God's choosing and had to rule under God in strict obedience to the law. He was in no wise to displace God in the hearts of the people, but to represent him as his anointed and to do

his bidding. The people's desire to have a king *like the nations* was sinful, since it implied the rejection of Jehovah, I Sam. 8:5-7. The first king was, to a certain extent, a king such as the people demanded, but proved unfit to be a true theocratic king, unconditionally subject to the will of God and was therefore removed. David was pre-eminently the theocratic king. While God directly appointed the first two kings, He determined the succession of the following ones indirectly by primogeniture or by special directions given the kings as to their successors. The statements in I Sam. 10:18-24; II Sam. 5:3; and I Chron. 29 do not represent the kingship as dependent on the choice of the people; God himself does the choosing. In theory the king was, of course, strictly subject to the law, which he had to read continually, Deut. 17:19 ff. How much this was neglected, is clear from II Kings 22:10, 11. It does not cause surprise therefore that in practice he did very much as he pleased. Think of Saul and the priests of Nob, of Solomon and his polygamy, of Ahab and Naboth, of Jehu and Ahab's house etc.

Though some (Benzinger, Visser) maintain that Israel's king was originally also the chief priest, the proofs adduced for this, viz. I Sam. 14:34; 13:9; II Sam. 6:13, 14, 18; I Kings 8:14, are hardly sufficient to substantiate the contention. Naturally he was the leader of the armies in time of war, and judgment was entrusted to him primarily, though there were several others that judged in his name. Hence he is also called the judge in Deut. 17:9, 12; Micah 4:9; cf. also II Kings 15:5; Is. 16:5. Another important function of the king was to levy taxes. Solomon especially systematized the collection of these and carried it out rigorously, perhaps exacting too much, though the complaint of the people, I Kings 12:4, may have been due to the fact that they were hardly accustomed to taxation. In later history we hear little of a regular revenue, but it must have been raised for the maintainance of the government, II



Kings 23: 35 even speaking of the levying of special taxes.

A part of the taxes levied was always used for the support of the king and his court. Besides this he received the tribute of subjugated peoples, a great part of the booty taken in times of war, the proceeds of public commerce, I Kings 10: 11, 14, 15, presents of the people, I Sam. 10: 27; 16: 20, the income of his own gardens and lands, Amos 7: 1, and sometimes special taxes. That the maintenance of the royal court meant no small sacrifice on the part of the people, may be inferred from I Kings 4: 22, 23.

Very little is known respecting the officers that surrounded the king. Scripture speaks of the commander-in-chief, the commander of the body-guard, the recorder, who may have been the superintendent of the state archives (Keil), or the chief counsel of the king (Benzinger), the scribe or secretary of state, the minister of finances, who was especially over the tribute, twelve prefects to provide the necessities of the household, a head of the house and a cup-bearer, I Kings 4: 2-7. The impression received from the prophets regarding these officials is not favorable. They were often tyrannical, cruel and indiscreet, seeking to promote their own interests at the cost of the people. Partiality and intrigue were very common with them.

**e. Forms of Government after the Exile.** After the exile the Jews were under the jurisdiction of the Persian satrap that ruled the province "beyond the river," Neh. 2: 7, 9. A subordinate governor, sometimes chosen from among the Jews themselves, as f. i. Zerubbabel, Hag. 2: 2 and Nehemiah, Neh. 5: 14, was specially charged with the government of the Jews. It was his duty to look after the affairs of the empire in his district, particularly to collect the taxes and tribute. Matters of importance were brought before the people and, as a result, the elders once more gained importance. The high priest was the religious head of the nation, and in course of time, especially in the Greek period,



also became its civil head. The sacred office gradually deteriorated, when his civil functions overshadowed the religious, and the succession to this office was made dependent no more on Aaronic descent, but on the sovereign will of foreign kings. The highest bidder often received the high priestly robe. In the time of the Maccabees the Jews once more enjoyed at least a semblance of independence, the high priestly and the princely dignity being united in one person. In the last centuries B. C. the power of the high priest was circumscribed by the Sanhedrin, which probably originated in the aristocratic *gerousia*. It consisted of 71 or 72 members, which, at least in later times, were partly Sadducean priests, partly elders of the people and partly Pharisaic scribes, Matt. 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66; Acts 23:7, and was presided over by the high priest. It was not only a court of justice, but also a governing body, which in the time of the Maccabees had almost unlimited powers. Herod the Great found it necessary to put a check on its ambitions, but after his death it was subject only to the supreme jurisdiction of the Roman procurators. Strictly speaking its legal authority extended only to Judea; nevertheless even the Jews of the diaspora honored its decisions. In the time of Herod the Great there was once more a kingdom of the Jews, but it lacked independence and was a mere travesty on the Theocracy. The king was a *Rex Socius*, a dignity that was not hereditary and was limited in several ways. The king could not wage war independently nor make treaties; he had no right to coin gold money and was in duty bound to furnish the Romans auxiliary troops in times of war. After the death of Herod Judea was soon made directly subject to Roman procurators, who resided at Caesarea, but during the great feasts took up their abode in the palace of Herod at Jerusalem. It was their duty to provide for the collection of taxes and tribute; to pass judgment on all matters involving the interests of the empire and especially on all capital crimes, except in the case

of Roman citizens; and to maintain order in the province with the aid of the troops placed at their disposal, which were composed exclusively of the non-Jewish inhabitants of the land, since the Jews were free from military service.

---

## 2. THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

a. **Origin, Character and Development of Hebrew Law.** The laws of Israel were directly promulgated by God himself, and therefore embody principles of eternal justice that are just as binding on us as they were on the old covenant people. At the same time these laws do not lose sight of the primitive status of Israel, and of the historical environment that conditioned its life. Many of them are merely the codification of ancient usages, as a comparison of the Code of Hammurabi with the laws of Moses plainly shows. Some principles that are considered basic in law at present, are not recognized in those ancient codes, as f. i. the principle that before the law all men are equal. Women scarcely had any legal status; children could be sold by their parents; and slaves were regarded as the property of their masters. Moreover the conception of right was based to a great extent on the *jus talionis*. It was considered an honor to take vengeance, though the law of retribution was mitigated in various ways. The injury done might in some cases be made good by paying a sum of money to be determined by the judge. Besides the law contained many humane enactments with respect to the needy, such as widows, orphans, strangers, etc.

We distinguish three stages in the promulgation of the law. There are laws that were given at Sinai, in the very beginning of Israel's life in the desert. This group includes both the large and the little book of the covenant, i. e. Ex. 20:20-23:33; 34:10-26, the laws of Leviticus and those contained in Numbers 1-10:10. The

next group of laws are those that were given by God during the years of Israel's wandering in the desert, and that are scattered through the chapters 10:11-21 of the book of Numbers. And finally there are laws that were promulgated in the Plains of Moab, viz. those found in the chapters 22-36 of Numbers and in the book of Deuteronomy. These laws were not all the fruit of revelation in the restricted sense of the term. They were partly in perfect harmony with established usages, though they also partly advanced far beyond it and aimed at leading Israel up to a higher level. A comparative study of the different codes reveals the fact that, while the earlier laws were adapted to conditions in the wilderness, the later ones were given with a view to a settled life in Canaan.

**b. Judges and Courts of Law.** Originally the head of any particular circle was judge. The father was the judge of his home, and the elders were family and tribal judges. Seeking relief from the arduous task that rested upon him in the wilderness, Moses appointed seventy elders as special judges. In course of time Israel's family and tribal judges were supplemented by those of a priestly character. Being pre-eminently the teachers of the law, Deut. 33:10, the most difficult judicial matters were referred to them, Deut. 17:8-13, and especially to the high priest, who often reached decisions through Urim and Thummim. When Israel became a kingdom, the highest judicial power was vested in the king, Deut. 17:9, 12; II Kings 15:5; Is. 16:5, who naturally became the last resort in all important matters, I Sam. 8:20; II Sam. 12:1-6; 15:4-6; 14:5 ff.; II Kings 15:5.

It is rather difficult to trace the origin of the courts of law among Israel. Visser holds that probably Deut. 17:8-13 presupposes a supreme court at Jerusalem with both a civil and a religious president. Archaeology II

p. 215; but this passage admits of and even favors another interpretation. In the time of Jehoshaphat a change was effected in the judicial policy of the kingdom, since he "set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, etc.," II Chron. 19:5. In Jerusalem he instituted a supreme court, consisting of both priests and Levites, of which the prince of Judah was the presiding officer in civil, and the high priest in religious affairs. In the post-exilic period the *gerousia* arose, composed of the most important priests, the nobility of the people. They gradually led to the institution of local courts (synedria) and to that of the great Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, which was more representative, the constituent elements being the chief priests, the elders and the scribes. After the destruction of Jerusalem the administration of justice was partly entrusted to the rabbinical college of Jamnia.

c. **Judicial Procedure.** The task of the earliest judges was simply to explain the law, as it applied to particular cases, or to attempt a friendly settlement of difficulties that had arisen,—and this only in case these matters were brought before them in the regular way. They could not speak with authority. After the tribes settled in Canaan, this condition was changed somewhat, but even then the commonwealth did not prosecute cases of its own accord. If there was no accuser, there was no judge. Since the law did not cover all cases, a great deal was left to the discrimination of the judge. All the details of a case that was brought before him had to be carefully examined, and the decision was to be characterized above all by impartiality. In capital cases, Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6, and later also in other criminal cases, it was unlawful to condemn a person on the strength of a single witness; two or three were required, and if they proved false, it was to be done to them, as they thought to do to others, Deut. 19:15-21. In

the particular case of parents appearing against a rebellious son, it was sufficient that father and mother concurred in the accusation, Deut. 21:18-21. If in other cases there were no witnesses, the defendant could clear himself by means of an oath, Ex. 22:10, 11. In some difficult cases there was a direct appeal to Jehovah, Josh. 7:14; I Sam. 14:40; Prov. 18:18; Num. 5:11-31.

In ancient times the place of trial was ordinarily near the principal gate of the city, Deut. 21:19; 22:15; Job 5:4; but Moses heard cases at the door of the tent of meeting, Num. 16:19, and Deborah under a palm tree, Judg. 4:5. In Jerusalem the court often sat in front of the temple. The complainant usually stood at the right hand of the defendant, who appeared in a mourning garb and with disheveled hair to awaken sympathy. Witnesses were, so it seems, adjured to tell all they knew and, failing in this, were punished, Lev. 5:1. Sentence was passed orally, though in later times it may have been written. Execution followed immediately and, if the offense was not a capital one, before the very eyes of the judge. The death penalty was usually inflicted by the whole community, the witnesses being required to take the most important part. The method of the Sanhedrin was rather interesting. The members of the council sat in a half circle, with two secretaries to record all opinions, the one those in favor of, the other those against the defendant, who stood before them in a humble garb and was allowed to testify in his own behalf. In case he was accused of a capital crime, the first argument was to be in his favor, and a person who had once spoken in his behalf could no more speak against him, though the reverse was possible. After the pros and cons were duly considered, the vote was taken, a majority of one being sufficient to acquit, but a majority of two being required for conviction. Acquittal was possible on the very day on



which the trial terminated, condemnation not until the day after. In the time of our Lord the Sanhedrin could indeed try capital cases, but was not allowed to execute the death penalty.

d. **Criminal Law.** In the administration of justice among the Hebrews, as well as among other nations, criminal law naturally played a great part. The people that was set aside for God's special service formed no exception in this respect, since all manner of wickedness and violence was rife among them.

(1) **The Basic Principle of Criminal Law and its Modifications.** The penal laws of Israel were, no doubt, like all their other laws, determined more or less by previous institutions and customs, but their controlling element was the divine purpose that Israel should reflect in its own life the righteousness of its God. In general the law was based on the *jus talionis*, strict retribution being required. Yet it is not true that it aimed only at satisfaction to the person offended or injured. Its great aim was to punish and root out evil and to promote righteousness. The strict application of the *jus talionis* was modified in several ways among Israel. While according to ancient custom it devolved on the nearest of kin to take revenge, the institution of the cities of refuge offered a way of escape, and gradually changed private retaliation into judicial punishment. An important distinction was made also between presumptuous crimes and trespasses resulting from weakness, thoughtlessness or negligence, which could be expiated by sacrifice. Moreover it was possible in some cases to substitute a fine for bodily punishment. On the other hand, at the direct injunction of God himself the children were sometimes punished with the parents, Josh. 7: 24; Num. 16: 27, 32; II Kings 9: 26.

(2) **Different Kinds of Transgressions.** Two classes of transgressions may be distinguished, viz. offenses



against fellow-men, and offenses against good morals and religion. Among the former the gravest transgression was the taking of another's life, which was punished according to the general principle that "whoso sheddeth a man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," Gen. 9:6, no matter, whether he slew him with his own hand, or was otherwise responsible for his death, Ex. 21:29, but cf. vs. 30; Deut. 22:8. An important distinction was made, however, between wilful murder and unintentional homicide; and also between the killing of a free Israelite and the slaying of one's slave, Ex. 21:20. Maltreating one's parents was also punished by death, Ex. 21:15. He who wounded another, had to pay for his loss of time and for his treatment; and if one smote his servant so that permanent injury resulted, he was in duty bound to let him go free. Kidnapping was punishable by death, Ex. 21:16, but ordinary theft was generally atoned for by making double or four- or even five-fold restitution. Damage or loss that resulted from the carelessness of one's neighbor had to be made good by compensation, Ex. 21:33-36; 22:5, 6. Shepherds also had to restore in certain cases what was lost of the flock, Ex. 22:13; 22:10-12.

They who offended against good morals were usually put to death, as f. i. a child cursing its parents, Ex. 21:17; a stubborn and rebellious son, Deut. 21:18 ff.; an adulterer, Lev. 20:10; one who seduced a betrothed maiden and, in some cases, the maiden also, Deut. 22:23 ff.; they who were parties to any degree of incest, Lev. 20:7-15; and a priest's daughter playing the harlot. The holiness of God and of his kingdom were also sacredly guarded. The punishment of death was inflicted on those who cursed God or used his name blasphemously, Lev. 24:15 f.; who profaned the Sabbath, Ex. 31:14, omitted circumcision, Gen. 17:14, the passover, Num. 9:13, or fasting on the day of atonement, Lev. 23:29;

who ate leavened bread during the paschal week, Ex. 12:19, or the blood or fat of sacrifices; and who deliberately transgressed the laws of purification, Lev. 7:20 f.; 22:3; Num. 19:13, 20. Only in case these transgressions were the result of ignorance, could they be atoned for by sin- and trespass-offerings. Idolatry and sorcery was also punished by death.

(3) **Punishments.** Among the punishments inflicted by the ancient Hebrews three kinds may be distinguished, viz. capital punishment, corporal punishment and fines. The usual methods by which they put criminals to death were stoning or piercing with the sword or some other weapon, Ex. 8:26; 17:4; 19:13; Num. 14:10; 25:7; I Sam. 22:17; II Sam. 1:15; I Kings 2:25. This punishment was sometimes aggravated by burning, Lev. 20:14; 21:9, or by hanging, Deut. 21:22. One suspended on a tree was not to be left overnight, lest the land should be profaned. All other forms of capital punishment, such as beheading, Matt. 14:10, and crucifixion, were of foreign origin. Death on the cross was regarded as a disgrace and a curse, being inflicted ordinarily on slaves only. It was also a slow and very painful death; in many cases the sufferer did not succumb until the third day. Of corporal punishments flogging with a rod or with a whip made of leather thongs, was the most common. The number of stripes given was determined by the character of the offense, but might in no case exceed forty, Deut. 25:1-3. For fear of going beyond that number through a mistake in counting the Jews usually limited themselves to 39 stripes. A woman who committed a highly immoral deed had to lose her right hand, Deut. 25:11. Penalties in means or money were known in cases of theft, purloining and injury or insult. These fines might not exceed 100 shekels, and did not accrue to the benefit of the state, but were paid to the person aggrieved. A

slave was taxed at 30 shekels. Where lifeless objects had been stolen, the value or double the value had to be restored, while theft of cattle required a two-, four- or five-fold compensation. And if anyone unjustly withheld from another his property, this had to be restituted with one-fifth of the value added. Prov. 6:31 even speaks of a seven-fold restitution.

The earliest Hebrew laws know nothing of imprisonment. In Egypt it was quite common, Gen. 39:20-23; 40:3 ff., though it probably served only to detain the prisoner until the time of trial or execution. In later times unscrupulous rulers also practiced it in Israel, II Chron. 16:10; Jer. 20:2; 29:26; 32:2; 33:1. A cistern, Jer. 38:6, 7, or a part of some official's house, Gen. 40:3; Jer. 37:15, 20, was used for incarceration. Manacles and fetters were rather common, II Sam. 3:34; Job 36:8; Ps. 149:8; Jer. 52:11, and stocks were employed by Greeks and Romans, Acts 16:24, cf. also Jer. 29:26. A singular punishment was the ban. Originally a person or thing under the ban was devoted to God in the sense of given up to destruction. Indestructible things were in such cases confiscated to the sanctuary, Deut. 13:15 ff.; Judg. 20:48; 21:10. After the exile the principle of the ban was modified. It was directed against everything that seemed to threaten the existence of the Theocracy. For persons the penalty was no longer death, but excommunication, John 9:22. According to the Talmud there were two forms of the ban, a lighter and a heavier one, the latter excluding from every degree of intercourse with the Jewish community.

**e. Civil Law.** In a well ordered community it is essential that the various relations of life be regulated by law. In this respect the laws of Israel were superior to those of the surrounding nations.

(1) **Personal Rights.** The full rights of citizenship were, strictly speaking, accorded only to the head of the

family. Even the rights of major or married sons were limited somewhat by those of his father (cf. Visser II, p. 237), and the prerogatives of married daughters were naturally circumscribed by those of their husbands and of the heads of the families which they joined in marriage. The privileges of slaves were, of course limited, and those of foreign extraction might be kept in permanent servitude. Besides the slaves there were two classes of strangers that dwelt among Israel, viz. the foreigners (*nokhri*) and the sojourners (*gerim*). The former were in no way related to the Israelite tribes, but belonged to another people and consequently had no rights in Israel. The latter were such as took up their abode permanently with the Hebrew people, placed themselves under the protection of one of the tribes, had certain obligations and, as a result, also certain rights. They were entitled to charitable treatment, Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Deut. 10:18, could defend their rights in public, and were protected by the law against a perversion of judgment, Deut. 24:17; 27:19. And though their rights were not altogether equivalent to those of the Israelites, yet the law stipulated that there should be one law for the Israelite and for the stranger, Lev. 24:22; Num. 9:14; 15:16. They could be incorporated in Israel by circumcision, and in that case their duties and privileges were, of course, similar to those of every Israelite. After the exile the Israelite state could no more dictate to the strangers that dwelt with them in the land; the Jews could only avoid contact with them as much as possible. Naturally they had the right to insist on certain obligations for those who joined the congregation of Israel as proselytes.

(2) **Rights of Marriage.** Marriage was primarily, if not exclusively, a private affair; but the relation of man and wife to each other, together with their mutual

duties and privileges were at least partly defined by the law. The Hebrew man could have as many wives as he chose and as his means would allow; and he regarded them more or less as his personal property. Adultery on the part of the man did not affect his own marriage-tie, but only that of the woman with whom he committed the crime. Adultery on the part of the woman, however, resulted in the disruption of her own matrimonial relationship. Moreover the man only had the right of divorce. The Talmud specifies that a boy must be thirteen years and one day and a girl twelve years and one day, before they can enter wedlock; and that at eighteen a person should be married. The duties of the husband were to provide food and drink, clothing and a dwelling for his wife and children, to protect them to the best of his ability against the ills and misfortunes of life, and to insure them shelter and sustenance after his death. On the other hand he was entitled to the earnings of his wife, to whatever she found, to the income of her private property and to her inheritance, if she had any. The Israelites were forbidden to intermarry with the Canaanites, Deut. 7: 1-3, and to enter into marriage relations with near relatives, the levirate marriage being an exception, Lev. 18: 16; 20: 21; Deut. 25: 5 ff. A person could legitimately refuse his brother's wife, but this was regarded as a dishonor. In such a case the woman would draw off his shoe, the symbol of right or authority, before the judge, thus indicating that he spurned what he should have considered an honor, and would contemptuously spit in his face.

**(3) Rights of Property.** Commercial transactions were very simple among the Israelites, the law merely insisting on right weights and right measures. In Babylon a sale without a contract was legal, and the earliest mention of any in the Bible is in Jer. 32: 7 ff.



A feeling of piety naturally prohibited a son from selling his father's land, I Kings 21:3, but poverty sometimes made it imperative, Neh. 5:1-13. The estrangement of property was limited, however, by the right of redemption, Jer. 32:7 ff.; Lev. 25:25 ff. If one was constrained to part with the inheritance of his fathers for a season, he himself or his nearest of kin could redeem it, the price being determined according to the years that were still to elapse before the year of jubilee, since the temporary owner really bought and possessed only the usufruct of the land. In the year of jubilee all property returned to its original owner, except houses in a walled city which, if they were not redeemed within a year, became the permanent possession of those who bought them. It was quite customary in commercial dealings to give an earnest, guaranteeing the fulfilment of an obligation. If this consisted of an upper raiment, it had to be returned before evening, Ex. 22:26 ff.; Job 22:6; 24:9; Prov. 20:16. Moreover an upper millstone or the raiment of a widow might not be taken in pledge, Deut. 24:6, 13, 17. Neither were creditors allowed to enter the house of a debtor to take away a pledge; they had to remain outside and take what was given, Deut. 24:10, 11. Yet these charitable regulations were not always heeded. Borrowing was in vogue among Israel, though not as a result of commerce, which would have necessitated a credit system. The law forbade the Israelite, however, to take usury of his brethren, but allowed it with respect to the foreigners that traded among them, Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36; Deut. 23:19. It does not determine what would be a reasonable percentage of interest, nor how a creditor could exact payment. It seems that he could sell the debtor's property, Micah 2:9, his wife and children, and also the debtor himself, II Kings 4:1; Neh. 5:5; Is. 50:1, cf. also Matt. 18:25. In the sabbatic year he was not allowed to



demand payment; hence it became difficult to borrow money shortly before the year of rest.

(4) **The Right of Inheritance.** According to ancient laws the daughters of a house were excluded from the right of inheritance, and only the sons were heirs, the sons of concubines as well as others; cf. the sons of Jacob. Partiality in dividing the inheritance was strictly forbidden, but it was explicitly required that the first-born of the father should receive a double portion and should, in turn, provide for the dependent members of the household. For special reasons the father could and sometimes did give the birthright to a younger son, Gen 21:1 ff.; 49:13, 22-26; I Kings 1:11-13. A special instance gave rise to the rule that, if a man had no sons, his daughters might be made his heirs, it being specified in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad that they would lose the inheritance, if they married outside of their tribe, Num. 36:2, 3. In case a man had neither sons nor daughters, his inheritance would pass to his brothers; if he had no brothers, to those of his father; and if his father had no brothers, to his nearest of kin, Num. 27:1-11. Testaments were not known in ancient times, but gradually came into use under Greek and Roman influence, Gal. 3:15; Heb. 9:17. As a rule the father divided the inheritance on his deathbed.

---

### 3. THE MILITARY SYSTEM

a. **The Army.** War was to some extent a religious duty for the Hebrews, since they were called to execute God's judgment on the enemies of his kingdom. Because the Canaanites had filled the measure of their iniquity and constituted a real danger for Israel, it was incumbent on the chosen race to destroy them. The execution of Jehovah's ban on these nations, practically

ended Israel's wars of conquest; their later wars were primarily defensive. The division of the people in the wilderness into companies of tens, fifties, hundreds and thousands was, no doubt, primarily a civil arrangement, but became the basis of their military organization. It appears from Num. 1:3 that the whole male population over twenty years of age, as far as it was able to bear arms, was subject to military duty. Complete lists of these were kept by the *shoterim* (scribes). The upper age limit of military service is not known, but may have been fifty like that of the Levites. Certain classes, such as the faint-hearted, the betrothed, the newly married, etc., might be excused from duty, at least temporarily, Deut. 20:5-9; 25:5. When the host prepared for war, a priest was present to offer sacrifices, to give divine directions and to encourage the people. At first the Israelite army consisted of infantry only, Deut. 17:16; 20:1; Josh. 11:6, 9, but David already forestalled a change in this respect, reserving a hundred of the Syrian chariot horses, II Sam. 8:4. In his time too it seems to have become customary for high officials to ride on mules, II Sam. 13:29; 18:9; I Kings 1:38. Solomon took the initiative in establishing a distinct cavalry division.

The first traces of a standing army are found in the time of Saul. He took 3,000 men from among the tribes, I Sam. 13:2; 24:2, which he gradually supplemented by others, 14:52. David increased the army almost a hundred-fold, choosing  $12 \times 24,000 = 288,000$  men, of which one division served each month, I Chron. 27:1 ff. Besides the host he had the heroes (*gibborim*), 600 in number, consisting originally of the valiant men that were with him during the years of his persecution by Saul. And in addition to these there were the Cherethites and the Pelethites, the body-guard of the king, which may have consisted chiefly of foreigners. In

time of war a special levy was sometimes made, I Kings 12:21; cf. for larger armies II Chron. 13:3; 14:8. During the royal period, as before, the tribes usually followed the tribal banner. A commander-in-chief was over the whole army. David already began hiring foreign mercenaries, II Sam. 15:18; in the time of the Maccabees this practice greatly increased; and in the days of Herod the Great the armies consisted primarily of foreigners that were lured on by prospective booty. The Roman army was composed of legions, each commanded by a chiliarch and varying in size in different periods from 4,200 to 6,000. The legion was divided into 10 cohorts, the cohort into 3 maniples, and each maniple into 2 centuries. A Roman guard consisted of four men, a quaternion.

**b. Weapons.** Among the weapons of defense the shield was the most prominent. Ancient shields were made of a frame of wood or wicker-work, covered with hide. They were sometimes anointed to make the leather supple and glistening and to protect it from dampness. Little is known of their form, except that the Assyrian shields were usually round, and the Egyptian oblong, square at the bottom and rounded or pointed at the top. As a rule they had a handle near the center of the side next to the person. Solomon made 300 shields of beaten gold which were, in all probability, to be borne in processions as symbols of power. Helmets are rarely mentioned in the Old Testament, Uzziah being the first to provide his army with them, II Chron. 26:14. The monuments show the Egyptian soldiers wearing close-fitting caps of leather or felt, sometimes covered with strips of metal. Perhaps Jeremiah refers to these in 46:4. The Assyrian was considered fully equipped only when he had a helmet, which was generally similar to that of the Egyptian, though it was sometimes entirely covered with metal. The armor is

first mentioned in connection with Saul and Goliath, I Sam. 17:5, 39. Ahab also had a coat of mail, I Kings 22:34, and Uzziah provided them for his soldiers, II Chron. 26:14. The Hebrew word *shiryon* or *shiryan* probably gives some indication of its construction of scales, of which large quantities were found in the ruins of Nineveh. In its most complete form it was a garment like a shirt without sleeves, covered with thin metal scales. Greaves, or armor for the legs, are mentioned in the Bible only as worn by Goliath. The heavy-armed soldiers of the Assyrians wore them, while the Roman soldiers had sandals only, Eph. 6:15.

One of the principal offensive weapons was the bow and arrow which, with the sling, formed the chief weapons for fighting at a distance. It was employed by common soldiers, by charioteers and also by persons of the highest rank, the Benjamites being especially skilled in its use, I Chron. 8:40; II Chron. 14:8. Bows were made of wood and of copper or bronze, the strings of the intestines of animals, and arrows of polished wood or of reeds with a metal or stone tip. The use of the sling is first spoken of in Judg. 20:16, where the Benjamites are again singled out for special mention. As early as the time of Elishah there was a company of slingers in the army, II Kings 3:25. The sling consisted of a strip of leather wide in the middle and narrow at the ends. Smooth stones and balls made of hard clay were used for hurling. Naturally other weapons were used for hand to hand fighting, of which the sword was the most important. Orientals had different kinds of swords, straight and curved, long and short ones. In all probability the sword in general use among the Israelites was straight, Judg. 3:21, 22; I Sam. 31:4-6. It was usually made of iron, though some bronze Egyptian swords have been found, and was as a rule carried in a sheath on the left side; cf. for an exception Judg.

3:16. The spear and javelin were also offensive weapons and were carried alike by the chiefs and by the common soldiery, I Sam. 18:10; 21:8. The spear may have been the special weapon of Naphtali, I Chron. 12:34. The shaft was of wood and was provided at one end with a sharp iron blade, while the other end was pointed, so that it could be stuck in the ground when not in use. The battle-ax was probably not employed by Israel, though Egyptians, Assyrians and Chaldeans had it, Jer. 46:22. The chariot was of special significance in times of war; Pharaoh had 600 and Jabin 900 at his disposal. In Solomon's time they were introduced in Israel, I Kings 10:29. They were low two-wheeled vehicles, drawn by at least two horses, and were sometimes made more formidable by fastening scythes or sickles to the wheels. Two persons, who entered the chariot from behind, usually occupied it, of which the one acted as charioteer and the other as warrior. Sometimes there was an additional one, who was technically called "the third," and who probably held the shield.

**c. Method of Warfare.** War was generally preceded by a conference looking to a peaceable settlement of difficulties; if this failed, a formal declaration of war followed, Deut. 20:10; Judg. 11:12; II Kings 14:8. It is not known with certainty, how the army was arranged in battle, a division into two, three and four columns being mentioned, Gen. 14:15; I Sam. 11:11; II Sam. 18:2; I Kings 20:27; II Macc. 8:22. The king was protected by a special guard. Some of the inscriptions reveal bodies of soldiers in closed columns of eight ranks, with six, ten or more men in each rank. Spies were often sent out before an attack was made, and the blast of the trumpet marked the beginning of the battle. Strategies of various sorts were often resorted to, including the ambuscade, feints and circumvention or at-



tacks in the rear. The fighting was mostly hand to hand.

In defensive warfare fortified cities and fortresses naturally played a very important part. Many Oriental cities had walls of great size and strength. These were so thick that large bodies of men could be massed upon them. Occasionally a second and third wall was built behind the first one. The entrances to these fortified cities were closed by heavy iron-clad gates, while at regular intervals towers for defense capped the walls, Ps. 48: 12. A moat or ditch surrounded the walls, which, if filled with water, made approach very difficult. Whenever possible these cities were built on high ground, and in case a siege was feared, the wells were covered and the water was led into the city, while outlying fortresses were often built. A besieging army did not lightly venture near the walls, II Sam. 11: 20, since it feared the showers of arrows, sticks of wood, stones, boiling water or oil, etc., that were poured down upon them. Frequent attempts were made to lure the men by strategy outside the city walls. If these proved unsuccessful, the walls were often undermined. In later times the battering-ram and the movable tower were employed, the latter usually built as high or even higher than the walls of the city; cf. the sculpture representing the storming of Lachish by Sennacherib. Assyrian inscriptions also show that the catapult was used very early for projecting spears or other missiles. If necessary, the walls were scaled, the heavy-armed soldiers ascending first, while the archers and slingers protected them from the enemy. In a regular siege it was also customary to cut off the water supply, provisions and all communication with the outer world.

Many nations of antiquity treated the prisoners of war very cruelly. They impaled them, skinned them alive, tore out their tongue or put out their eyes. The Assy-



ian collected the heads and the Egyptian, the hands of the slain as trophies, showing the extent of the victory. Women and children were bound together like cattle and driven off, scantily clad, bareheaded and barefooted, to be sold as slaves. That the Israelites differed from these nations, was due to the restraints of the Mosaic law, II Kings 6:22; II Chron. 28:8-15. They seem to have been known for their humane character, I Kings 20:31. Naturally the punishment they meted out to the Canaanites, at the direct command of God, was exceptional.



## PART THREE

---

### RELIGIOUS LIFE



# I. BEFORE THE GIVING OF THE LAW

---

## 1. ANCIENT RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND USAGES

Religion is as old as the human race. Subjectively considered, it was given with the image of God in man; and even after man's fall in sin the *semen religionis* (seed of religion) is still latent in his heart and will develop under proper conditions through the operation of the Holy Spirit. After that sad turning-point in paradise, fraught with dire and far-reaching consequences, God immediately came to man with a revelation of himself and of his grace. By doing this He inaugurated a new religious development in the midst of ever increasing wickedness. The earliest forms in which this religious life expressed itself were sacrifice and prayer. Opinions differ somewhat as to the original character of sacrifices. In all probability they were first and foremost media through which man exercised communion with God, since all their Hebrew and Greek names point to them as gifts expressing devotion to God and consumed in his service. As such they may have existed even before the fall. Very soon, however, the consciousness of the separation wrought by sin led under divine guidance to the idea of expiatory sacrifices.

The exact character of the offerings of Cain and Abel is rather uncertain, but those of Noah, Gen. 8:21, and of Job 1:5, seem plainly to have been brought with a view to expiation. In patriarchal times sacrifices were usually brought by the head of the house, the only official priest of that time mentioned in Scripture being Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18; 22:13; 35:14. The so-called covenant sacri-

fice was peculiar, Gen. 15:9 ff. It was deeply significant that the animals were cut in two, that the halves were laid opposite each other, and that the covenanting parties passed between the pieces. Thus the unity of the contracting parties and their punishment in case they did not meet their obligations, were clearly symbolized. Only clean animals and animals of a certain age were brought to the Lord, Gen. 8:20; 15:9. From the earliest times too it was customary to approach God with the sacrifices of praise, since in the days of Enos it already became a public practice "to call upon the Name of the Lord," Gen. 4:26.

The custom of paying tithes is of uncertain origin. It was in vogue among several of the Semitic nations, and was also followed by Abraham, the father of the faithful, Gen. 14:20. The oath was quite customary among the patriarchs, Gen. 14:22; 22:16; 24:2; 26:31; 31:53; 47:29. Its usual form was that of lifting up the hand in appeal to God, or of placing it under the thigh of him to whom the oath was sworn, thus invoking his posterity to guard the oath and to avenge all unfaithfulness, Gen. 24:2 ff. The formulae used were: "I lift my hands up to God"; or, "I swear by God"; or, at least in later times, "The Lord do so unto me and more also"; or, "The Lord is witness." Joseph swears by the life of Pharaoh, Gen. 42:15. Circumcision was practiced by some of the ancient peoples, as f. i. the Egyptians, as a preventative against impurity and disease, before it was instituted in the family of Abraham, Gen. 17. Among Israel, however, it received special significance as the sign of the covenant, symbolizing the removal of the impurity of the heart, Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Rom. 4:9-13; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11. Every male child born in Israel, whether of free Israelites or of bond-servants, was circumcized on the eighth day, the naming of the child often accompanying it.



## 2. ALTARS AND THEOPHANIES

It is in connection with the history of Noah that Scripture first speaks of an altar (Latin *altar*, *altus* = high). The name was applied to any raised place or structure on which sacrifices were offered or incense burned as an act of worship. The fundamental law of the altar was, that it was to be built where Jehovah manifested himself, Ex. 20:24, 25, and had to be constructed of earth or of unhewn stones; to dress the stones would bring pollution upon the altar. The great significance of the altar was and always has been, that it was the place where God and the worshiper met. Many heathen nations, passing through the stages of fetishism, animism and polytheism, built altars by rocks and streams, by trees and mountains, because they regarded these as the special dwelling-places of the deities. Modern criticism claims to find traces of this deification of rocks and trees, etc. also among the patriarchs, but the evidence at hand does not bear out their contention.

God often revealed himself to the patriarchs in Theophanies, which were transient manifestations of Jehovah (not Elohim) in the person of the "Angel of the Lord," Gen. 16:7, or the "Angel of the Presence," Ex. 32:34; 33:14. The question is debatable, whether the Angel of the Lord assumed an actual body, or was incorporeal and merely had the appearance of the human form. These passing appearances in course of time gave way to the Shekinah, the visible majesty of the divine presence in tabernacle and temple.

---

## 3. THE SABBATH

The Sabbath is one of the primitive institutions of man. Gen. 2:2, 3 informs us that "on the seventh day God finished his work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. And

God blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all his work which God had made (in a creative way)." Without any direct command the necessity of keeping the Sabbath holy was impressed on the heart of man, since "the Sabbath was made for man," Mark 2:27. Its economic and religious significance implies that it must have existed as a day of rest from the very beginning; and the fourth commandment in the form of Ex. 20:8-11 contains the same implication. Moreover the Bible preserved a historic reference to the keeping of the Sabbath before the law was given to Israel, Ex. 16:5, 22-30. That a division of time into periods of seven days was known from the earliest times is quite evident also from the history of the flood, Gen. 8:10, 12; and from the fact that the Assyrian tablets of the reign of Ashurbanipal show that special significance was attached to the seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth days of the month; yet not as days of rest, but as days that were inauspicious for certain specified acts. It is true that the Bible narrative contains very little evidence that the Sabbath was really observed before the giving of the law; but this finds a ready explanation in the brevity of the narrative and in the fact that the Sabbath was not so sharply marked off from the other days at that time as it is now, since nomadic tribes had to continue a certain part of their work even on the Sabbath.

---

#### 4. IDOLATRY

There is no sufficient ground to accuse the patriarchs of idolatry. The assertion of Benzinger that they worshiped stones, trees, fountains, etc. is not borne out by the testimony of Scripture. Yet there were evidences of image worship in the family of Jacob, Gen. 31:19, 34; 35:2. A veil of obscurity rests on the religious life of Israel in Egypt, though in all probability the previously adopted forms of

worship were maintained. Evidently it was customary to offer sacrifices and to keep feasts unto the Lord, Ex. 5:17; 8:27; 10:9. Moreover the rite of circumcision was faithfully performed, Josh. 5:2-7. Yet, notwithstanding Israel's separation in Goshen, it was influenced for evil by the Egyptians, since it also worshiped idols there, Josh. 24:14.

---

## II. AS DETERMINED BY THE LAW

---

### A. General Character of Religious Life under the Law

---

#### 1. THE SYMBOLICAL AND TYPICAL ELEMENT

The religious life of Israel under the law was organically connected with that before the law, the essential element in both being that God gives himself to his people, while they in turn devote themselves to Jehovah. Some new elements were added to their religion just before they reached Sinai: the Passover was instituted, and the first-born were sanctified. At the historic mountain of Arabia Israel was constituted a nation, and what had been the religion of individuals and tribes now became a national religion. As such it took on a more external aspect in harmony with the stage of Israel's religious development, and was carefully regulated by the law. This law with its civil, ceremonial and moral aspects, was essentially one, and served the purpose of (1) regulating the whole life of Israel; (2) bringing Israel to a sense of its sin; (3) restraining the evil in its national life; and (4) being the tutor of the people to lead them to Christ. It was imperative therefore that it should also contain a revelation of grace; and this was indeed contained in the ceremonial law. Old Testament worship had this in common with other ancient religions that it was mainly symbolical, external forms embodying spiritual and eternal truths. More-

over it was typical, prefiguring, as it did, future realities, casting before it shadows of better things to come. The interpretation of the Old Testament revelation must take account of this special character; at the same time it should be marked by great sobriety in handling the symbolico-typical element. We should bear in mind (1) that the typical sense must be based on the symbolical; (2) that it should be assumed only where the Bible warrants it either directly or by implication; and (3) that, though Israel's religion may have some elements in common with the religions of the Gentiles, it is always essentially different.

---

## **2. THE EMPHASIS PLACED ON HOLINESS**

The fundamental requirement of the law was that of holiness, i. e. of separation from the world in devotion to God. Jehovah spoke to Israel just previous to the promulgation of the law: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," Ex. 19:6; and, basing his exhortation on his own holiness, repeatedly exhorted the people to be holy, Ex. 22:31; Lev. 11:44. 45; 19:2; 20:26. This idea of holiness permeates the whole religion of Israel. Hence the Bible speaks of a holy person, Lev. 8:1-8; a holy family, Lev. 21:6; a holy tribe, Num. 8:14; a holy people, Ex. 19:6; and also of a holy place, Is. 27:13; a holy house, Is. 64:11; a holy city, Neh. 11:1; and a holy land, Zech. 2:12. Taking this predominating idea as our principle of division, we shall treat in the following pages of Holy Places, Holy Persons, Holy Rites and Holy Seasons.

---

### **B. Holy Places**

---

#### **1. THE TABERNACLE**

**a. Construction and Divisions.** The religious wor-

ship of Israel found its first center in the tabernacle described in Ex. 25-27; 30:1-6, and 35-38. It was constructed strictly according to the pattern exhibited to Moses on the Mount, Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Heb. 8:5; and of the free-will offerings of the people, regarded as an atonement for their souls, Ex. 30:16. The principal artisans to whom the construction of the tabernacle was entrusted were Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, men who were specially endowed for their work by the Holy Spirit, Ex. 31:1-6. The frame of the tabernacle proper was constructed of 48 boards of acacia or shittim wood, overlaid with gold, 10 cubits long and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  wide. Each one of these boards had two tenons on the lower end, made to fit into two silver sockets. Of these boards twenty were arranged on the north, twenty on the south and eight on the west side. They were held in place by five bars that were passed, it would seem, through rings on the outside of the boards, the center bar reaching from end to end. The entire eastern side formed the entrance, where a row of five pillars, overlaid with gold and resting in sockets of brass, supported a beautifully embroidered curtain of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen, Ex. 36:20-38. This enclosure measured on the inside was 30 cubits long, 10 wide and 10 high; and was divided into two parts, the length of the Holy Place being 20 cubits, while the Holy of Holies was a cube of 10 cubits. These two divisions were separated from each other by "the veil," a fabric of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen, embroidered with cherubim of cunning workmanship. It was supported by four pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold and resting in sockets of silver. There was a fourfold covering of the tabernacle, the texture of the first being similar to that of the veil. It consisted of two parts that were 28 cubits long and 20 wide, each one made up of five narrow strips sewed together, and attached the one to the other by means of loops and taches. This covering was placed directly over



the framework of the tabernacle, so that its division exactly corresponded with the partition between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The second covering made of goat's hair also consisted of two parts, each 30 cubits long, while the one was 24 and the other 20 cubits wide. The place of coupling corresponded with that of the first covering. It is a debatable question, whether the second covering was placed directly upon the first, or was spread over the tabernacle in the form of a tent. The latter seems likely in view of the fact that this would afford the best protection against dampness, and because Scripture speaks of the second covering as "the tent of the tabernacle," Ex. 36:14, and mentions "the pins of the tabernacle," as distinguished from those of the court, Ex. 27:19, 35:18. Besides these two there was also a third covering for the tent made of ram's skins dyed red, and a fourth one of badger's skins, Ex. 36:19.

Around the sanctuary proper was the court, an enclosure of 100 cubits long and 50 wide. It was formed by 60 wooden pillars, having a length of 5 cubits and also placed 5 cubits apart, on which a white canvas of fine twined linen was suspended. The pillars had sockets of brass, and at the top each one had a capital overlaid with silver. The entrance of the court was at the east and was closed by a curtain 20 cubits wide and of elaborate workmanship. Ropes and pins held the whole structure securely in place.

**b. Furniture.** In the court near the entrance was the altar of burnt-offerings, a square hollow structure, measuring 5 cubits on each side and 3 cubits high. It was made of acacia planks overlaid with brass, the horns on its upper corners being of one piece with the rest of the structure. Half way up the sides of the altar was a projecting ledge, and under this a brazen netting that surrounded the altar. When in use it was most likely filled with earth, and was approached by means of an incline. Like all the furniture of the tabernacle, except perhaps the laver, it was provided



with rings and staves for carrying it. Accompanying the altar were its instruments and vessels, such as pots (for the ashes), shovels, basins, fleshhooks and firepans. All the bloody sacrifices were brought on this altar. The laver stood between the altar and the door of the sanctuary proper. It was made of the brazen mirrors presented by the women of Israel, and rested on a base also made of brass. The water which it contained was used by the priests in cleaning themselves before they officiated at the altar or in the sanctuary; and may also have served for washing the flesh of the sacrifices.

In the tabernacle proper and near the entrance was the golden candlestick on the south, and the table of shewbread on the north side. The former consisted of an upright shaft resting on a pedestal, from which six other shafts proceeded, three on either side opposite each other, and extended upward to the same level as the main shaft. The candlestick was made of beaten gold, its shafts ornamented with "bowls," "knops" and "flowers;" and provided at the top with small receptacles for oil, it furnished the light which the priests needed in the performance of their duties, Lev. 24:1-4. The table of shewbread was made of acacia wood and every part of it was plated over with gold. It had the form of an ordinary table with a border round about it, and a golden crown to the border; and on it were found dishes, spoons, flagons and bowls, receptacles for wine and frankincense. On every sabbath twelve loaves of bread, called the bread of the Presence or shewbread, were placed on the table as a continual meal-offering unto the Lord, having pure frankincense on them for a memorial, Lev. 24:5-9. On the following sabbath they were replaced by others, and while the frankincense was burned on the altar, they were eaten by the priests in the Holy Place. Just before the veil was the golden altar of incense, made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, having a length and breadth of one, and a height of two cubits. Its top was surrounded

with a golden moulding, and the upper corners were provided with horns. At this altar an offering of incense was made each morning and evening, and on it the blood of the sacrifices that were brought on the Day of Atonement was sprinkled.

The most sacred object in the tabernacle was the ark of the covenant with the mercy-seat, the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies. It was a simple chest of acacia wood, one cubit and a half wide and high and two cubits and a half long. Around the top was a gilded rim or moulding. The mercy-seat, which served as the lid of the ark, was made of solid gold, and had on each end, and of a piece with it, a cherub of beaten gold, the one facing the other with the head slightly inclined toward the mercy-seat, which they covered with their wings. In the ark were the tables of the law and, at least part of the time, a pot of manna and the rod of Aaron that budded. It was only on the Day of Atonement that the high priest might enter this innermost sanctuary to sprinkle the blood of atonement on the mercy-seat.

**c. Symbolico-typical Significance.** The tabernacle and its furniture had symbolical and typical significance and as such formed a part of God's revelation. It was the house of God, symbolizing not only his presence among his people, but also his heavenly abode. Moreover in connection with its ceremonial service it revealed symbolically the way in which sinners could approach God and stand in his presence. At the same time it was a type of Christ who, in connection with his Church, is the true tabernacle in which God dwells, the highest revelation of the way in which we can come to God and find acceptance with him.

Coming now to the furniture of the tabernacle, the altar of burnt-offering was the place where God and his people met on a sacrificial basis. It loudly proclaimed that without the shedding of blood there was no approach to and no communion with God. The laver taught the people that not

only justification, but sanctification, holiness as well, was required of those that would dwell in God's house. The furniture in the sanctuary proper testified to the privileges of believers: the candlestick to the light that is in them; the table of shewbread, on the one hand, to their consecration to God, and on the other, to the nourishment which they received from him; and the golden altar with its cloud of incense to the acceptance of their prayers as they rose up to God. And finally the ark of the covenant with the mercy-seat symbolized the throne of God, a throne of mercy founded on justice, where the people through their sacrifices could find favor with God and were privileged to stand in his presence. Moreover all these articles of furniture pointed forward to Christ, our justification and sanctification, filling us with the light of his Spirit, nourishing our souls with spiritual manna, and making intercession for us by the Father,—Christ, through whose one great sacrifice the throne of God becomes the true mercy-seat, the throne of grace.

The tabernacle was borne through the wilderness by the Levites, and after the entrance into the Holy Land, it was pitched at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim. Just before the battle of Eben-ezer the ark was taken from its resting-place and never returned to the tabernacle. The sanctuary was probably transferred to Nob at the time of Shiloh's destruction. During the last part of David's and the first part of Solomon's reign it was at Gibeon; and finally it was stored away in one of the store-rooms of the temple.

---

## 2. THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

a. **Construction and Divisions.** David entertained the thought of building for the Lord a permanent house, but this privilege was reserved for Solomon, who began the building of the temple in the fourth year of his reign. He constructed it of white hard limestone, quarried in different

parts of the land, and of cedar and cypress wood from Lebanon. Gold, silver and brass were used in great abundance to beautify the house. The stones were entirely prepared before they were brought to Jerusalem, and the brass work was cast in the Plain of the Jordan by Hiram of Tyre, an expert worker in brass. Everything was so well prepared that "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building," I Kings 6:7. The temple was built on Mount Moria, on the site now marked by the Mosque of Omar. Since the level area of the mountain was too small, the foundations had to be laid very deep and the empty space between the mountain-top and the outer wall was filled up with earth. The temple proper was built of large stones and faced the east. Its walls were plumb on the inside, but on the outside the north, south and west walls were reduced thrice by a cubit, first at a height of five cubits, again at an elevation of eleven cubits, and once more at a height of seventeen cubits. Taking the inside measurements, the sanctuary was 60 cubits long, 20 wide and 30 high. Like the tabernacle it was divided into two parts, of which the Holy Place was 40 x 20 x 30, and the Holy of Holies measured 20 x 20 x 20 cubits. The ten cubits above the latter were used for chambers. The flat roof was constructed of rafters and boards of cedar, overlaid with an incrustation of marble. A partition of cedar wood, containing a folding door of wild olive wood, effected the division between the two parts of the sanctuary. The walls and the ceiling were all covered with panels on which cherubs, palms and open flowers were carved, the whole overlaid with gold. Behind the door leading to the Holy of Holies was a veil very similar to that of the tabernacle, but more costly. The entrance of the Holy Place consisted of a door made of cypress wood with doorposts of olive. It led out into a porch that was just as wide as the rest of the building and ten cubits deep. In front of the porch were two detached pillars of brass, called

Jachin (he establishes) and Boaz (in him is strength). To the sides and the back of the building wings were added of three stories, each story being five cubits high and containing rooms for the priests and for the temple requisites. One end of the joists of these stories rested on the projections of the temple walls, so that, while the undermost story was five cubits wide, the second was six and the third seven. Together these stories were eighteen cubits high, leaving twelve cubits of the temple wall bare for the necessary windows.

The inner court surrounded the temple and was reserved for the priests and the Levites. It was probably double the size of the tabernacle court, i. e. 200 x 100 cubits, and was formed by a boundary wall, composed of three rows of hewn stones laid one upon the other, and a row of cedar beams. Outside of this wall and adjoining it was the outer court for the use of the people, II Chron. 4:9. The size of this court is not known, but it probably surrounded the inner court entirely, and seems to have been lower, Jer. 36:10.

**b. Furniture.** The furniture of Solomon's temple differed somewhat from that of the tabernacle. The Holy of Holies contained two additional cherubim of olive wood, overlaid with gold. Their wings were spread out and their faces, turned to the Holy Place, were like those of the other cherubim slightly inclined towards the mercy-seat. The Holy Place was furnished with the altar of incense; ten golden candlesticks similar to that of the tabernacle, five on either side of the sanctuary; and ten tables of shewbread similarly arranged. In the inner court was the brazen altar, 20 cubits long and wide by 10 high, and in all probability filled with earth and unhewn stones. An incline led to some landing on which the priests stood and moved about, when they ministered at the altar. Between the altar and the porch of the temple, and probably a little to the south, was the brazen or molten sea, 5 cubits high, 10 in diameter at the top and 30 in circumference. It was sup-



ported by twelve brazen oxen with their heads turned to the cardinal points, three looking in each direction, and contained 2000 baths of water. In addition to this there were ten stands with brass basins for washing the flesh of the sacrifices.

**c. History of the Temple.** Solomon completed his temple in seven years, and consecrated it with solemn thanksgiving and prayer, accompanied with liberal thank offerings. In the time of Rehoboam Shishak plundered the temple, I Kings 14:26; and in later years Asa used the gold and silver that was left in the treasures of the temple to purchase the help of Benhadad against Baasha, I Kings 15:18. Jehoshaphat renewed the outer court and Jehoash also brought about considerable repairs, II Chron. 20:5; II Kings 12:5. Shortly after Jehoash of Israel took all the gold and silver and the vessels that were in the house of the Lord, II Kings 14:14. Jotham rebuilt the higher gate of the temple, II Kings 15:35; II Chron. 27:3; but Ahaz removed the altar of burnt offering from its place and built another in its stead, took the brazen oxen away and caused the brazen sea to be placed on a pedestal of stone, and also stripped the washstands of their decorations,—all to please the king of Assyria, II Kings 16:17 f. Even Hezekiah took the gold of the Lord's house to pay the tribute imposed on him by Sennacherib, II Kings 18:15. The temple was greatly desecrated by Manasseh, who had altars erected in the courts for the whole host of heaven, set up an image of Astarte in the sanctuary, and built abodes for hierodules in the temple and stables for horses in the inner court, II Kings 21:4, 5, 7; 23:7, 11. Josiah once more purged the house of the Lord, but shortly after Nebuchadnezzar carried its treasures to Babylon, II Kings 24:13. Eleven years later the temple was destroyed, and all the valuable vessels that were left were taken to the land of the captivity.



### 3. THE TEMPLE OF ZERUBBABEL

When the Jews returned from Babylon, they immediately rebuilt the altar on its base, Ezra 3:3. Then the foundation of the temple was laid, the Phoenicians again supplying cedar wood from Lebanon. But the Samaritans were successful in checking the work for a while; yet, notwithstanding their constant machinations, the house of the Lord was completed in B. C. 516. We have very little data regarding the size and structure of the second temple. In all probability its inner dimensions did not differ materially from those of the temple of Solomon. From I Macc. 4:51 we learn that both divisions of the sanctuary proper were provided with curtains at the entrance. According to Josephus the Holy of Holies was empty, while Talmudists claim that it contained a large stone on which the high priest sprinkled the blood of atonement. The Holy Place contained an altar of incense overlaid with gold, and also a candlestick and a table of shewbread, I Macc. 1:22. The altar of burnt offering was of the same size as that in Solomon's temple, Jos. c. Apionem 1:22, while instead of the brazen sea there was a simple laver, Eccles. 50:3. Evidently the courts of the temple also had several depositories and rooms for the priests, Ezra 8:29; 10:6; Neh. 3:30; 10:37; 12:44.

This temple was plundered and desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in B. C. 168, but Judas Maccabeus cleansed, restored and rededicated it just three years later. Alexander Jannaeus built a wooden partition around the altar and that part of the temple which only the priests might enter, Jos. Ant. XV 13:5. Pompey captured and entered the temple, but did not sack it. Crassus, however, robbed it of its treasures in 54, 53 B. C.

---

### 4. THE TEMPLE OF HEROD

Herod the Great altered and enlarged the temple to such

a degree that it practically amounted to building a new one, though the Talmudists insist on the identity of this temple with that of Zerubbabel. He began building operations in B. C. 20 (734 A. U.) completed the temple proper in a year and a half, and the courts and halls in eight years. The erection of the subsidiary buildings, however, went on until A. D. 64. The temple area was first enlarged still more by immense substructures, and surrounded by a massive wall capable of military defense. The inclosure immediately surrounded by this wall was the court of the gentiles, that was paved throughout with variegated marble and surrounded with a magnificent colonnade forming spacious porticoes. There were three rows of marble pillars on each side, except on the south side, which had four. The eastern colonnade was called "Solomon's porch," John 10:23, being the supposed site of Solomon's royal palace. This outer court was separated by a low wall, beyond which gentiles might not pass, from the terrace of the inner court, which was reached by a flight of twelve or fourteen steps. The principal entrance to this court, the gate called "the Beautiful," Acts 3:2, was on the east and opened on the court of the women. This contained a colonnade on three sides and also thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles for various contributions, Luke 21:2. From the court of the women a flight of fifteen steps in the form of a half circle led up to the court of Israel. On these steps the Levites sang and played during the ordinary services at the sanctuary. The court of Israel was really one with that of the priests, being separated from it only by a low wall one and a half feet high. Two steps led from the one into the other. The court of the priests encompassed the whole temple and measured 187 cubits from east to west and 135 from north to south. Chambers and depositories were built in convenient places along the wall. In this court was the huge altar of burnt-offerings, 48 cubits square at the base and 36 at the top, and, inclusive of the horns, 15 cubits

high. It was made of unhewn stones and reached by a long and wide incline. Nearer the temple and a little to the south was a colossal brazen reservoir, resting on the backs of twelve immense lions. Another flight of twelve steps led from the court of the priests to the temple proper, a grand structure, built entirely of white marble and lavishly gilded. It had a high and spacious porch and was surrounded by chambers for the priests. The inside measurements seem to have corresponded with those of Solomon's temple, except as to its height. Like the other temples it was divided into two parts, separated by a wooden partition, probably containing a door, in front of which "the veil" was suspended. The Holy of Holies was empty, but the Holy Place contained as before the altar of incense, the table of shewbread and the golden candlestick. The whole temple, with the exception of the porch, had a gabled roof of cedar wood, armed with golden spikes and surrounded by a magnificent balustrade. This beautiful temple was destroyed by the Romans in A. D. 70.

---

## C. Holy Persons

---

### 1. THE LEVITES

Had Israel shown itself capable of living in close and direct communion with its God, the whole nation would have had the prerogative of the priesthood, for it was destined to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. But the inability of the people to stand in God's presence soon became evident, Ex. 20:18, 19. At their own request Moses stood between them and the Lord, while shortly after, at Jehovah's command, Aaron and his sons were chosen to minister at the sanctuary, Ex. 28:1. They were to mediate between the people and its God and to be a constant reminder of the nation's high ideal. Later still the whole tribe of Levi was substituted for the first-born in special consecration

to the Lord, Ex. 13:2; 32:28, 29; Num. 3:11-51; 8:16-18.

The Levites were divided into three families, viz. the Gershonites, the Kohathites and the Merarites. They were chosen for the purpose of assisting Aaron and his sons. Naturally their services in the wilderness differed somewhat from those which they performed, when Israel had settled in Canaan. During the sojourn in the desert they had, besides their regular duties, the special task of moving the tabernacle from place to place, the Gershonites being charged with the care of the coverings, the curtains and the cords of the tent, the Merarites having charge of the framework of the sanctuary, and the Kohathites serving as the custodians of the furniture after it was covered by the priests, Num. 4:5-15. After the settlement it was the duty of the Levites to guard the sanctuary, to open and close it, to clean its utensils, to prepare the shewbread, to direct the musical service at the sanctuary, to assist the priests in preparing the sacrifices, to teach the people, to examine the lepers and to look after the temple stores. They could enter on all their duties only when they were thirty years of age, Num. 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 47 (but cf. also Num. 8:24 and I Chron. 23:24), and their period of service terminated at the age of fifty. David divided the Levites into twenty-four classes in connection with the song-service of the sanctuary, I Chron. 25.

The consecration of the Levites consisted of four distinct acts: (1) They were sprinkled with sin-water, i. e. water that symbolically purged from sin; (2) their entire body was shaved, their clothes washed and a consecration victim offered; (3) they were waved before Jehovah as a wave-offering and thus dedicated to the Lord's service; and (4) a sin- and a burnt-offering was brought to make atonement for their souls.

They had no portion among the tribes of Israel; the Lord was their inheritance, which implied that he would provide for them. He gave them forty-eight cities, four in

each tribe, except that Judah and Simeon together furnished nine and Naphtali but three; each of these cities had a tract of land around it for pasturage. This was the inalienable property of the Levites. Moreover they were entitled to a tenth of the income of Israel, Num. 18:20, 21.

---

## 2. THE PRIESTS

Among the Levites only the male descendants of Aaron were eligible to the priesthood, and even they had to be free from serious physical and moral defects, Lev. 21:17-23. Nothing is said as to the age when they could begin actual participation in the priestly functions, but in all probability the time limits set for the Levites also applied to the priests. Since they were pre-eminently holy unto the Lord, they were not allowed to defile themselves for the dead, except in the case of a near relative, nor to disfigure themselves in mourning, Lev. 21:1-6; 10-15. Neither was it permissible for them to marry a prostitute or a divorced woman; they could marry only a virgin or a widow. And while officiating at the sanctuary it was incumbent on them to abstain from wine and strong drink.

The priests were intermediaries between God and the people. In general it may be said that they represented the people at the dwelling-place of the Most High, just as the prophets represented God among the people. They only were competent to offer sacrifices at the altar. Receiving the offerings of the people, they brought them to God and, in turn, blessed the congregation in the Name of the Lord. It was their duty to offer incense every morning and evening in the Holy Place, to cleanse the golden candlestick and provide it with oil, and to substitute the new shewbread for the old on every Sabbath. Moreover they were required to keep the interior of the sanctuary clean, to guard its entrance, to keep the fire burning continually on the altar, and to remove the ashes and other refuse. And finally they



also had the oversight of the Levites, had to judge of the fitness of animals for sacrifice, to determine the value of objects presented to be redeemed, to examine the lepers, teach the people, act as judges, etc.

The priests were consecrated for their work by an even more impressive ceremonial than the Levites, in the presence of the whole congregation, Ex. 29: 1-44. (1) The bodies of the candidates were bathed with water and invested with the holy garments, possibly all made (though the Bible does not state this with respect to the girdle) of byssus, which may have been a fine quality of linen. These goods suggested and were conducive to coolness, while their white color was the symbol of purity. The clothing consisted of a tunic made of one piece that fitted close to the body and reached to the feet; drawers, reaching from the loins to the thighs; a girdle which, according to Josephus, was embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet (Ex. 39:29 states this only respecting the girdle of the high priest); and a turban resembling the inverted calyx of a flower. (2) They were anointed with an ointment specially prepared for the occasion, and composed of myrrh, cinnamon, cassia and calamus, mixed with the purest olive oil. (3) Then three different sacrifices were brought for them, viz. a bullock for a sin-offering, a ram for a burnt-offering, and a ram for an offering of consecration. Some of the blood of consecration was put on the tip of their right ear, on the thumb of their right hand and on the great toe of their right foot, signifying their whole consecration to God. (4) And finally some of this blood, mingled with the anointing oil, was sprinkled on the garments of the people.

The Lord himself provided for the maintenance of the priests. They received a tenth of the income of the Levites, Num. 18:26-32; and the first-born of men and beasts were theirs with the understanding that for the first-born of men and of unclean beasts redemption money was to be paid, Num. 18:13. Moreover the firstfruits belonged to them,



Num. 18:12, 13; and further a part of all the sacrifices (except of the burnt-offerings), Num. 18:18; the shew-bread, Lev. 24:9; the land confiscated to the sanctuary, Lev. 27:16-21; and what was left of the oil for the purification of a leper, Lev. 14:10, ff.

David divided the priests into twenty-four divisions, each one representing a family, sixteen of these being of the line of Eleazar and eight of the line of Ithamar. The order in which they performed their duties at the sanctuary was determined by lot, each division remaining on duty at the house of God one week, from sabbath to sabbath, II Kings 11:9; I Chron. 24; II Chron. 23:4. Only four of these classes returned from the exile with Zerubbabel, Ezra 2:36-39. Eventually, however, the original number was restored by dividing these four into twenty-four, I Macc. 2:1; Luke 1:5.

---

### 3. THE HIGH PRIEST

**a. His Requirements and Duties.** Aaron was the first high priest, and the right of succession was probably determined by primogeniture, unless legal or moral disabilities intervened, Lev. 21:16-23; I Kings 2:27, 35. He was most emphatically "holy unto the Lord." Therefore he was not permitted to mourn for nor to touch the dead body of even his father or mother; he was allowed to marry only a virgin of Israel; and, at least in later times, he might not have had for a mother one who had been a captive. The consecration of the high priest was similar to that of the common priests.

The whole priestly service, of course, stood open to the high priest; he might do as much or as little of the ordinary daily service as he chose. Ordinarily he left everything to the other priests, except on the Sabbath and on other festivals. The duties that devolved exclusively on him consisted in: (1) Presenting the sin-offering for himself and the whole

congregation whenever this was required, Lev. 4:15, 16; (2) officiating in the ceremonies of the great Day of Atonement, Lev. 16; (3) bringing the daily meat-offering, partly in the morning and partly in the evening, Lev. 6:14, 20, which as a matter of fact was usually done by another priest, but at the expense of the high priest; (4) giving divine decisions by means of Urim and Thummim, Num. 27:21; and (5) pronouncing a final decision in matters falling under the jurisdiction of the priesthood, Deut. 17:8.

**b. His Distinctive Dress.** The high priest had four distinct articles of dress besides those of the common priests, viz.: (1) The robe of the ephod, so called because it was never worn without the ephod. It was made of byssus, was of a sky-blue color, contained no sleeves and reached only to the knees. At the top it had an opening with a strongly protected border through which the head was thrust. The bottom edge was fringed with alternating figures of pomegranates, embroidered in blue, purple and scarlet, and little golden bells, according to the rabbins seventy-two in number, that made a tinkling noise, while the high priest officiated in the sanctuary. (2) The ephod, also made of byssus, into which were wrought threads of gold, blue, purple and scarlet. Its form is not clearly indicated in Scripture. According to rabbinical tradition it consisted of seven parts, viz. two pieces to cover the front and the back of the body, two shoulder strips by which the two pieces just mentioned were connected, on each of these an onyx stone set in gold, on which the names of the tribes of Israel were engraved, and a girdle by which the ephod was held close to the body. (3) The breastplate made of the same material and in a similar artistic fashion as the ephod. It was doubled in such a way as to form a square pocket measuring a span. On the breastplate were mounted in golden settings four rows of precious stones, each row containing three, on which were engraved the names of Israel's tribes; and in the breastplate was the Urim and Thummim.

It was fastened to the ephod, at the top with little golden chains, and at the bottom with blue cords. (4) The golden plate on the front of the mitre with the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." It was attached to a strip of blue lace that was fastened to the mitre, and brought out the responsibility of the high priest for the holy things of Israel, Ex. 28:38. Besides this dress, called "the finely wrought garments," or (in the Talmud) "the golden clothing," the high priest had another costume, wholly white, which he wore while offering the expiatory sacrifices on the Day of Atonement.

**c. The Symbolico-Typical Significance of the Priesthood.** The priests among Israel had symbolical and typical significance. In this connection we must bear in mind that there were two sides to the priesthood. They represented in a symbolic way both the people that were redeemed, that were justified and sanctified, were the recipients of life and light, and obtained free access to the throne of God; and the agent of their redemption, where they ministered at the sanctuary and thus opened the way by which sinners could approach the Holy One that dwelt between the cherubim. Moreover they typified the New Testament Church of God, which is a royal priesthood, with its Mediator. They were the types of believers in so far as they were the recipients of great spiritual blessings; and they typified Christ in their divine appointment, Heb. 5:5; in offering up expiatory sacrifices, Heb. 10:11, 12; in their intercessory work, Heb. 7:25; and in their approach to God in the inner sanctuary, Heb. 9:7, 24.

---

#### 4. THE NETHINIM

In course of time the Levites were assisted in the heavier and more menial duties of their office by a class of persons known as temple slaves. As early as the time of Joshuah the Gibeonites were appointed as hewers of wood and

drawers of water, Josh. 9:21. Subsequently David and other kings engaged other persons for similar services. In post-exilic times these Nethinim (given ones), as they were called, probably consisted of persons who were incorporated in Israel, I Chron. 9:2; Ezra 2:43; 7:7; 8:20; Neh. 7:46. They had their abode partly in Jerusalem and partly in the cities of the Levites, Neh. 3:26, 31; 11:21; Ezra 2:70; Neh. 7:73. From the fact that several of them returned from the exile we may infer that their burden was not unbearable.

---

## D. Holy Rites

---

### 1. THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM IN GENERAL

The original idea of sacrifice seems to have been that of a gift to the Deity, a conception that does not necessarily presuppose sin. But this idea was substantially altered when, in consequence of the sin of man, the element of expiation was introduced. Man's sin made his approach to God impossible, but revelation again opened the way by supplying the idea of substitution. Thus two motives were given for sacrificial worship, the one by natural revelation, impelling man to offer gifts to God; the other by supernatural revelation, prompting him to offer expiatory sacrifices. These elements are recognized also in the Mosaic system, the unbloody offerings expressing only consecration, the bloody ones symbolizing both expiation and consecration. Only oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons, corn, wine and oil were acceptable material for sacrifice. They were the products of the regular occupations of the Israelites and also constituted their ordinary food. Representing therefore both the fruit and the substance of man's life, they could best symbolize the surrender of the human life to God. With respect to the bloody sacrifices it should also be borne in mind that the animal brought to the altar did not represent

the offerer in a purely symbolical, but in a strictly vicarious sense. The idea was not merely that what was done symbolically to the animal ought to have been done to the offerer; but that the animal took the place of man, since what was done to it could not be done to the offerer with the desired effect. Yet this vicarious conception included the symbolical.

---

## 2. THE SACRIFICIAL RITUAL AND ITS MEANING

**a. The Selection of the Animal within the Limits Specified.** The animal brought as a sacrifice had to be perfect in its kind, both as to age and character. This was required not merely because it served to express the strength and purity of the offerer's consecration, but especially because the animal's vigor and perfection was symbolical of the sinlessness that made it fit for the altar of God, cf. I Pet. 1:18, 19.

**b. The Laying on of Hands.** The laying on of hands took place in the case of every ordinary animal sacrifice (except that consisting of pigeons) and in animal sacrifices only. This transaction always implies a transfer of something from one person to another, cf. Gen. 48:13, 14; Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; Num. 8:10; yet it does not always point to a real, but often to an ideal transfer. Such is the case also in the sacrificial ritual. And if the question is asked, what is transferred, Lev. 16:21 furnishes the answer. It is the sin of the offerer that is transferred to his sacrifice; but this sin only in a forensic sense, as liability to punishment, not this sin as a subjective quality. Hence the manipulation of the blood was still necessary after the laying on of hands.

**c. The Killing of the Animal.** The sacrificial animal was slain by the offerer himself and was not, as Delitzsch thinks, merely a means of getting at the blood and the flesh,



but had independent significance. This may be inferred from the fact that the altar derived its name from it (*mizbeach*, lit. place of killing); that the place where the killing had to be done (north side of the altar) was strictly regulated by the law; and that it was essential that the killing should be done on holy ground. In connection with the laying on of hands the death of the animal signified a vicarious punishment for sin. Notice that Deut. 21:1-9 speaks of expiation where no sprinkling of blood takes place, so that the death of the animal must be regarded as expiatory.

**d. The Manipulation of the Blood.** The blood of the sacrifices was manipulated in various ways. In the great majority of cases it was partly applied to the horns of the brazen altar or sprinkled on its sides and partly poured out at the base of the altar. The blood of the more important sin-offerings, however, was also carried into the Holy Place and applied to the horns of the golden altar and sprinkled toward the veil. On the great Day of Atonement it was even brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat. In view of the fact that according to the Bible the soul is in the blood, Gen. 9:4-6; Lev. 17:10-14; Deut. 12:23, this blood had special significance as representing the individual sentient life. Now in the bloody sacrifices the death of one soul is substituted for that of another, and the blood is the symbol of life poured out in death. As such it is brought before or raised up in the presence of Jehovah as a covering for the sin of man or, perhaps we might say, as a covering for man with respect to his sin, Lev. 17:11.

**e. The Burning of Certain Parts of the Animal on the Altar.** The burnt-offering was wholly consumed on the altar, but of all the other sacrifices only a part was burned on the sacrificial fire. This transaction is not to be looked upon as an intensification of the punishment symbolically inflicted on the animal, but as symbolizing the



offerer's consecration to God. At this stage the offering has ceased to be substitutionary and is simply a symbolical representation of the person who brings the sacrifice.

**f. The Disposition of the Remaining Pieces of the Sin-Offering.** The remaining pieces of the sin-offering were burned outside of the camp in case its blood had been brought into the sanctuary proper; but were eaten by the priests, if it remained in the court and was merely applied to the altar of burnt-offering. These parts must be conceived of as being the very embodiment of sin, so that their being burned or eaten by the priests signified the entire removal of sin. According to Lev. 10:17 God gave the meat of the sin-offering to the priests that they might bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord. The holiness of the priests swallows up the uncleanness of sin and neutralizes it.

**g. The Sacrificial Meal.** This feature was peculiar to the peace-offerings, just as the foregoing was characteristic of the sin-offerings. Only the fat of these sacrifices was consumed on the altar; the priests received the breast and the right shoulder; and the remainder constituted a sacrificial meal for the offerer and those of his family that were Levitically clean and desired to partake of the feast. This meal had to be eaten in the Holy Place. The idea expressed by it was that Jehovah as host received the offerer at his table; it suggested not merely fellowship in general, but fellowship and joy as gifts of God.

---

### 3. SACRIFICES THAT AIM AT EXPIATION

The law speaks of two kinds of sacrifices that presuppose a disturbed relationship of man to his God, and that aim at restoring the right relation, viz. the sin-offering and the trespass-offering. These sacrifices applied only to sins "through ignorance," as distinguished from those done presumptuously. But these sins through ignorance, according

to the rabbis, "were not only such as were committed strictly through want of knowledge, but also those which had been unintentional, or through weakness, or where the offender at the time realized not his guilt."

**a. The Sin-Offering.** The sin-offering was brought for sins of which the effect terminated primarily on the sinner himself. It contemplated sin, either sin in general or some particular transgression, as a violation of God's law that merited punishment. The material of this sacrifice varied according to the parties for whom it was made, Lev. 4. For the sin of the whole congregation and for that of the high priest, who represented the whole people, it was a bullock; for the ruler of the people, a male goat; and for one of the common people, a female goat or a female lamb. In cases of poverty a couple of turtle-doves or young pigeons could be brought.

Only the fat adhering to the inwards of this offering was consumed on the altar, and the remaining parts were burnt outside of the camp (or city), if expiation was to be made for the whole congregation or for the high priest; and was eaten by the priests in case the sacrifice was made for some private individual. The manipulation of the blood was the center of the ritual in this offering. If it was brought for one of the common people or for the ruler, the blood was partly applied to the horns of the brazen altar and partly poured out at the bottom of the altar; but when it was made for the high priest or for the whole congregation, the blood was sprinkled seven times before the inner veil and applied to the horns of the golden altar, while the remainder was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt-offering. On the great Day of Atonement the blood was even carried into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the mercy-seat.

**b. The Trespass-Offering.** In distinction from the sin-offering the trespass-offering was made for sins of which the effects terminated primarily on another, and for which not only a sacrifice was brought, but restitution was also

made. It was never made for sin in general, but always for some special transgression, more particularly for the sin of defrauding Jehovah, either directly by withholding from him the tithes, the firstlings, etc., or indirectly by purloining the property of his neighbor, which was also Jehovah's possession. The animal to be brought for a trespass-offering was a ram of definite value, except in the case of lepers and Nazarites, when it consisted of a lamb. No females were allowed, nor could any substitute be brought in cases of poverty. In many cases the sacrifice had to be preceded by a restitution of that which had fraudulently been taken, with the addition of one-fifth of its value. As of the sin-offering the fat of the inwards only was consumed on the altar, while the flesh was eaten by the priests for expiation; but the blood was sprinkled round about upon the altar of burnt-offering. The main idea of the trespass-offering was that of expiation by giving satisfaction. As such it pointed typically to the active obedience of Christ, just as the sin-offering typified his passive obedience. Lev. 5:15-19; 6:1-7.

---

#### 4. SACRIFICES EXPRESSIVE OF DEVOTION TO AND OF COMMUNION WITH GOD

There were four kinds of sacrifices that presupposed a right relation between man and his God, offerings that spoke of consecration and communion. Two of these, viz. the burnt-offering and peace-offering, were bloody, while the other two, viz. the meat-offering and the drink-offering, were unbloody. The idea of expiation was indeed subordinate but not altogether absent from these bloody sacrifices; it was entirely foreign to the bloodless ones, however.

a. **The Burnt-Offering.** The daily morning and evening sacrifice formed a continual burnt-offering, while special burnt-offerings were made on Sabbaths, New Moons

and many other occasions. If this offering was brought in connection with other sacrifices, it followed the sin- but preceded the peace-offering. It always consisted of an unblemished male animal, a bullock, a ram or a goat, except in the case of poverty, when turtle-doves or young pigeons of either sex were allowed. The blood of the sacrifice was thrown on the altar below the red line that ran around it, five cubits from its base. Then, after the skin, the sinew of the thigh, the stomach and the entrails (in the case of birds also the feathers and the wings) were removed, the sacrifice was cut in sections, duly salted and wholly burned. This burning of the whole animal on the altar was the characteristic feature of the burnt-offering, symbolizing the entire surrender to God, whether of the individual or of the congregation, and God's acceptance of them. The idea of expiation was present indeed, but that of whole-hearted devotion predominated. The burnt-offering too pointed to Christ who "both loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour," Eph. 5:2. Cf. Lev. 1.

**b. The Peace-Offering.** The peace-offerings are distinguished by the law into praise or thank-offerings, free will offerings, and votive offerings, the first being the most important. This division is not a strictly logical one, since the thank-offering could also be a free will or a votive offering, and these two, in turn, could also aim at thanksgiving and praise. As to the material of this sacrifice the law allowed great latitude; it might be an animal of the flock or of the herd, either male or female, but had to be without blemish, Lev. 3. Only the fat adhering to the inwards was consumed on the altar; the wave-breast was given to the priesthood and the heave-shoulder to the officiating priest, Lev. 7:29-36; the blood was sprinkled round about on the altar; and the remaining parts belonged to the offerer, constituting a sacrificial meal for him and his friends. This meal was the characteristic feature of the

peace-offering, thus adding to the idea of expiation and devotion, both included in this sacrifice, that of communion with God. It continually taught in a symbolic way that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1.

**c. The Meat- and Drink-Offerings.** These offerings were presented to Jehovah as food and drink, and aimed at maintaining symbolically the covenant relation. Hence the materials were not brought in their natural state, but in some prepared form. The meat-offering consisted of roasted ears of corn, fine flour or cakes, oil being added in every case; and the drink-offering was regularly brought in the form of wine. The oil was a complement and not a component part of the food; it generally served to make the food palatable, and in connection with the meat-offering, like in other parts of the temple service, symbolized the influence of the Spirit of God. The incense added to this offering, if it consisted of unground grain or flour, signified prayer; and the salt was the covenant salt of God. The meat-offering was first presented before the Lord; then a handful of it was burnt on the altar as a memorial, Lev. 2; and finally the remainder was eaten by the priests, except when the offering was brought for the priests themselves, Lev. 6:23. Scripture does not inform us respecting the manner in which the wine-offering was brought. Meat- and drink-offerings were sometimes brought independently, but more generally in connection with burnt- and peace-offerings (never with a sin- or a trespass-offering), completing the expression of man's consecration to God. Cf. Num. 15:18; Lev. 23:18; Ezra 7:17. In such cases the quantity of the material was determined by the animal brought in sacrifice, as:

For an ox— $3/10$  ephah of flour— $1/2$  hin of oil— $1/2$  hin of wine.

For a ram— $2/10$  ephah of flour— $1/3$  hin of oil— $1/3$  hin of wine.



For a lamb— $1/10$  ephah of flour— $1/4$  hin of oil— $1/4$  hin of wine.

The shewbread constantly renewed before the Lord was a sort of perpetual meat-offering.

---

## 5. CEREMONIAL PURIFICATIONS

**a. The General Idea of Purification.** Israel was called a holy people and its land, a holy land. This indicated at once a state unto which Israel was called and a condition that had to be realized in its life. This basic principle explains not only Israel's separation from the nations, but also the Levitical purifications required by the law. These purifications did not aim at teaching the people cleanliness or bodily purity, nor did they, except incidentally, serve a sanitary purpose. They had religious significance and intended to teach the people holiness in a symbolical way. The great obstacle in the way of holiness is sin, which permeates the whole man, not only contaminating the soul, but also defiling the body. Its bodily consequences are seen especially in death and in the decomposition that even in life is the result of death in our bodies, as f. i. in leprosy and in the various issues of the human body that represent a dissolution and a flowing away of life.

**b. The Special Cases of Defilement.** Of the various cases of defilement that resulting from contact with the dead was considered the most serious; and that proceeding from a human corpse was of a more aggravated character than that which resulted from a dead animal. A human corpse defiled both persons and inanimate objects for a period of seven days, and that not only if these came in actual contact with it, but even when they were in close proximity to it. Moreover this defilement might communicate itself to others. The carcass of an animal, on the other hand, polluted a person only in case he touched, carried or ate any part of



it; and this contamination lasted but a single day and was not communicable to others.

Leprosy defiled the person affected, and others only if they touched the leper; but it had no contaminating influence on inanimate objects. The rabbins reckoned the leper as among the dead, cf. also Num. 12:12. He was obliged to go about with his clothes rent, his hair disheveled and his upper lip covered, and to cry out, on the approach of anyone, "unclean, unclean!" He had to dwell alone "without the camp" (outside of the city), and though he could worship in the synagogues, he was bound to enter the building before anyone else, to sit in a separate place by himself and to leave after all others had gone.

The morbid issues defiled only the person afflicted and the objects on which part of the discharge alighted, except in more serious cases, which rendered unclean also those who came in contact with persons having an issue, or with inanimate objects that were defiled. After childbirth the mother was unclean forty days, if she had borne a male, and eighty days, if she had given birth to a female child.

**c. The Method of Purification.** The principal cleansing medium was water, and specifically living, i. e., running water, representing the idea of life, and symbolizing in its application, the restoration of life. In some of the more serious cases, however, the water was rendered more efficacious by the addition of the ashes of a sacrifice and a kind of lye water; in others by mixing it with blood, the principal element of life, and other substances regarded as antidotes of death; and in cases of defilement lasting more than seven days a sin-offering too was required. Thus the close connection between sin and uncleanness was clearly brought out.

In cases of uncleanness resulting from contact with a dead body purification was effected by sprinkling the unclean with water containing the ashes of a red heifer that had been burned as a sin-offering without the camp, Num. 19.

These ashes were secured as follows: A red heifer without blemish and that had never borne the yoke was burned in its entirety without the camp (later, outside the city). While it was burning, cedar wood, scarlet wool and hyssop were all thrown into the flames to add ceremonially to the efficacy of the ashes, the first being the symbol of the permanence, the second (bright red) of the vigour of life, and the third of purification. The burning being completed, the ashes were gathered by a clean person and laid up in a clean place, the remains of a single heifer lasting for a long time. In purification a person was sprinkled by a clean person—not necessarily a priest—with living water, mixed with the ashes of the heifer. This sprinkling was done by means of a bundle of hyssop and on the third and the seventh day of the person's uncleanness. On the last day he bathed and washed his clothing, after which he was clean in the evening. If the uncleanness had been contracted from the carcass of an animal, the disability lasted but a single day.

Whenever a leper recovered or thought himself cured, he had to present himself for examination to the priest. If it appeared that the disease had left him, he was first of all sprinkled with the water of purification, Lev. 13 and 14. The ceremony was unique. The cured leper brought to the priest two ceremonially clean birds, of which one was killed, its blood being caught in a vessel containing living water. The other bird was dipped into this mixture along with a bundle of cedar wood and hyssop, with which the leper was then sprinkled. Then the living bird was set free, symbolically carrying off the uncleanness; after which the leper washed his clothing, shaved off all the hair of his body and bathed his person. On the seventh day he appeared at the sanctuary and once more washed his clothes and bathed and shaved his body. A day later he brought the appointed sacrifice: two male lambs, the one for a burnt- and the other for a trespass-offering, and an ewe-lamb for a sin-offering, the burnt-offering being accompanied by a meat-offering.

In cases of poverty two turtle-doves or two young pigeons might be substituted for the lambs of the burnt- and of the sin-offering. Finally the leper was anointed with oil and with the blood of the trespass-offering on the tip of his right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot, a portion of the oil also being poured on his head.

The purification in cases of defilement resulting from an issue was more simple. Those directly affected were required to wait seven days after the issue ceased, when it was incumbent on them to wash their garments and to bathe their bodies in living water. On the eighth day, they completed their purification by bringing two turtle-doves or young pigeons, the one as a sin- and the other as a burnt-offering. After childbirth the mother was required to offer a turtle-dove or a young pigeon as a sin-offering, and for a burnt-offering a lamb of one year old. If she was too poor to provide a lamb, she was permitted to bring a turtle-dove or a young pigeon in its stead, cf. Luke 2:24. Those indirectly affected simply had to bathe their bodies and wash their clothing.

For the special purification required in the case of a woman suspected of adultery, and of a town near which a person was found mysteriously murdered, cf. Num. 5; Deut. 21:1-9.

---

## 6. VOWS

**a. Vows in General.** A vow is a solemn promise made to God to perform some act or to make some sacrifice, generally made in time of need, or in return for some special divine favor. Vows were not prescribed but merely regulated by the law; once made, however, their fulfilment was compulsory, Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21-23. The law distinguishes especially two kinds of vows, viz., the dedication vow, i. e., the promise to devote one's self or a por-

tion of one's possessions to God in return for his help; and the vow of abstinence, i. e., a sworn promise to abstain from some enjoyment or some act otherwise perfectly lawful. Naturally the things which already belonged to the Lord (as firstfruits, firstlings, etc.) and the proceeds of prostitution could not be the object of a votive offering. Of the objects that could lawfully be promised only the animals that were fit for sacrifice, were actually brought upon the altar; all the others could be redeemed, Lev. 27, men and women according to the following schedule:

Age of Persons	Redemption Money	
	For Males	For Females
1-5 years .....	5 shekels . . .	3 shekels
6-20 years .....	20 shekels . . .	10 shekels
21-60 years .....	50 shekels . . .	30 shekels
Above 60 years .....	15 shekels . . .	10 shekels

The other objects, such as houses, lands, animals that were unclean or unsuitable for sacrifice, were valued by the priest and could be redeemed for the price thus fixed, with the addition of one-fifth. If they were not redeemed, they were sold for the stipulated price, and the proceeds went to the sanctuary. In valuing a piece of land the priest took in consideration the length of time that was still to expire before the year of jubilee. The basis of valuation was the quantity of seed required to sow the field. In case the land was consecrated immediately after the year of jubilee, the price was fifty shekels the homer; if later, a reduction of one shekel for every year that elapsed had to be made. If the owner desired to redeem the land, he had to pay one-fifth besides the price fixed.

**b. The Cherem or Ban.** A special vow of dedication was the ban. Anything that fell under the ban was irrevocably withdrawn from common use, and was either consecrated irredeemably to God or to his sanctuary, Lev. 27:28; Num. 18:14; Ezek. 44:29; or put under a sentence of ex-

termination. In the latter sense the *cherem* was not always the result of man's voluntary action, but often of a special command of Jehovah. It deserves our attention that the thing so devoted to God was at the same time "most holy to the Lord." In the time of Ezra the character of the *cherem* changed somewhat, the element of punishment becoming more prominent; it included the forfeiture of a man's substance and his exclusion from the congregation, Ezra. 10:8; Matt. 18:17; John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2. In New Testament times he who was under the ban was cast out of the synagogue. A careful distinction was made, however, between the *niddaj* or temporary removal, and the *cherem* or absolute exclusion.

c. **The Nazarite's Vow.** Among the vows of abstinence that of the Nazarite was peculiar. A Nazarite was a person who consecrated himself to the Lord and was bound by his vow to abstain all the days of his Nazariteship from the use of wine and strong drink, and in fact from every product of the vine; from cutting his hair; and from all ceremonial defilement, Num. 6:1-21. The law knows only a Nazariteship for a specified period, but later history also speaks of Nazarites for life, as f. i. Samson and Samuel. If a Nazarite defiled himself during the period of consecration, he had to purify himself in the prescribed way, Num. 6:9 ff. and begin the period of separation anew. The law also carefully regulated the return of the Nazarite to the ordinary duties of life. He brought to the sanctuary a sin-, a burnt- and a peace-offering; had his head shaved and his hair put on the fire under the thank-offering, as a precaution against its profanation; and after the priest waved his peace-offering, he ate a portion of it, probably also again drinking wine. The Nazarite represented the idea of voluntary consecration to Jehovah, and symbolized a priestly life without a priestly office.



## 7. RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

**a. The First-born.** Since the deliverance from Egypt the first-born sons (i. e. of the fathers) were holy to the Lord. And when the Levites were appointed to serve at the sanctuary in their stead, the Lord did not yet relinquish his claim on them, but required that they should be redeemed. On the fortieth day after their birth they were presented to the Lord and redeemed for five shekels, Num. 18:16.

**b. The Firstlings.** The male firstlings of oxen, sheep and goats were brought to the sanctuary a year after the eighth day of their life and were offered to the Lord. The fat was burned on the altar, the blood sprinkled on its sides, and the flesh eaten by the priests. If the animal had some serious blemish, however, it was not sacrificed but eaten by the owner at home, Deut. 15:20. The firstling of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, and if this was not done, its neck had to be broken, Ex. 13:13; 34:20; cf. also Lev. 27:27; Num. 18:15.

**c. The Firstfruits.** The best of the firstfruits of the soil also belonged to Jehovah. They were brought to the sanctuary partly in their natural state (as grain and fruit) and partly as prepared for food (as flour, oil and wine). The priest presented them before the altar of the Lord, the offerer the while thanking the Lord for all his benefits, Deut. 26:1-11. The congregation of Israel was required to offer annually to the Lord by way of thanksgiving a firstling-sheaf at the Passover, before the beginning of the grain harvest, and a firstling-loaf at Pentecost, when the grain harvest was finished. Both of these were waved and thus symbolically presented to the Lord.

**d. Tithes.** According to the Mosaic law all the fruits of the ground and cattle were subject to tithing. It was not necessary, however, that the tithe of grain and fruit



should be paid in kind; the owner could redeem it at one-fifth more than its market value. Not so the tithe of the herd and flock, which was separated by causing the cattle to pass under the rod, every tenth animal being taken, whether it was without blemish or defective, Lev. 27:30-34. Every third year each man's tithe had to be laid up in his own town, where the Levite, the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless might then go and eat, Deut. 14:22-29.

**e. Atonement Money.** All the male Israelites, when they reached the age of twenty had to pay as atonement money half a shekel, Ex. 30:11-16. This money was used for the service of the sanctuary. It may be doubted, however, that this was intended as an annual tribute, though we do read of the Jews in the time of Nehemiah as voluntarily undertaking to pay annually "the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God," Neh. 10:32. About a century before Christ the Pharisees, who were then in power, enacted a law requiring the payment of half a shekel as temple tax from year to year, Jos. Ant. XVIII 9:1; cf. Matt. 17:24, 25.

---

## 8. SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL RITES

**a. Prayer.** Prayer is the most direct expression of the religious consciousness. Public calling on the name of the Lord dates as far back as the days of Enos, Gen. 4:26. Wherever the patriarchs erected an altar they called upon the name of the Lord, Gen. 12:8; 13:4; 21:33, etc. The intercession of men great in the kingdom of God was considered very desirable, Gen. 18:22 ff.; Ex. 32:31 ff.; Num. 14:13; I Kings 17:20. The law prescribed no prayer for public worship, except the confession of sin on the day of atonement, Lev. 16:21; and the thanksgiving to be offered, when the firstfruits were brought to the sanctuary and when the tithes were paid, Deut. 26:3 ff., 12 ff. Yet we may rest assured that among Israel every act of worship

was accompanied with prayer. As early as the time of David there were fixed times for prayer, viz. morning, noon and night, Ps. 55:17. It gradually became an established usage to offer prayer at the third, Acts 2:15, the sixth, Acts 10:9, and the ninth hour, Dan. 6:11; 9:21; Acts 3:1. Solitary rooms and secluded mountains were favorite places for prayer, Dan. 6:10; Acts 1:13; Luke 6:12; Mark 6:46; but the Pharisees of Jesus' time made a show of it in public places, Matt. 6:5, 17. Although it was customary to pray in a standing posture, deeper devotion was expressed by kneeling, I Kings 8:54; II Chron. 6:13; Ezra 9:5, or by bowing the head to the ground, Neh. 8:6; Judith 9:1. The hands were not folded, but spread towards heaven or in the direction of the Holy of Holies.

**b. Sacred Song and Music.** The people of Israel already sang praise to God, when they had scarcely left Egypt, on the shores of the Red Sea; and in the law of Moses it was already stipulated that the priests should blow the silver trumpets, while the sacrifices were brought on the Feast of the New Moon and on other festive occasions, Num. 10:10. David was the first, however, to make sacred song and music an integral part of the regular public worship at the sanctuary. He formed choirs of Levitical singers and musicians under the leadership of such men as Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, for the purpose of leading the congregational singing, I Chron. 16:42; II Chron. 5:12 ff.; 7:6; 29:25; 35:15. Little is known regarding the character of this singing and music, other than that which may be learned from the meagre hints that are contained in the inscriptions of the Psalms.

**c. Benediction.** To bless is to invoke the blessing of God upon or in behalf of someone and usually implies, when officially done, the promise that God will bless. The regular form of the priestly blessing is contained in Num. 6:24-26. It was pronounced by the priest after every morning and evening sacrifice with uplifted hands, Lev. 9:22, on the

congregation and its representatives. In later times it was used in the synagogues as well.

---

## E. Holy Seasons

---

### 1. THE DAILY SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY

Every morning and evening there were offered in the name of and on behalf of the whole congregation of Israel a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with oil as a meat-offering, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink-offering, Ex. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-8. The morning sacrifice burned all day, and the evening sacrifice, all night, thus forming a continual burnt-offering. At the same time frankincense was daily burned on the golden altar, in the morning when the lamps were being trimmed, and in the evening, when they were placed on the candlestick, Ex. 30:7, 8. These sacrifices were brought on the Sabbath as well as on the other days of the week. After the introduction of the song-service psalms were sung, while the daily sacrifice was made, to the accompaniment of instrumental music, I Chron. 16:40, ff. The service was always concluded with the benediction.

---

### 2. THE FEASTS IN GENERAL

Israel also had its special festivals. These formed two separate cycles in each of which the number seven played an important part. The first cycle had its starting point in the weekly Sabbath, and was based on the division of time in days, weeks, months and years. There was (a) the weekly Sabbath; (b) the Feast of the New Moon, especially that of the seventh New Moon, also called the Feast of Trumpets; (c) the Sabbatic Year, concluding a year-week; and the Year of Jubilee, at the end of  $7 \times 7$  years.

Alongside of this cycle there was another, which included the great feasts of the Hebrews, that had partly a historical and partly an agricultural significance. Two of these were so closely connected with the others that they were often counted as one with them. These feasts were: (a) the Pass-over; (b) the Feast of Unleavened Bread; (c) the Feast of Weeks; (d) the Feast of Tabernacles; and (e) the Octave. The two most important ones lasted *seven* days; the Feast of Weeks was just *seven* weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread; and the last two feasts fell in the *seventh* month. The first three were memorials of Israel's origin as the peculiar people of God and of its preservation, and the last two testified to Israel's felicity in enjoying the bounties of the Lord. Exclusive of the Sabbath strict sabbatic rest was observed on only six of the feast-days, viz. on the first and the seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, on the Feast of Trumpets, on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and on its Octave. And even on these days the rest was not as strict as that required on the Sabbath.

---

### 3. THE SABBATIC CYCLE

a. **The Weekly Sabbath.** Israel was required to abstain from all labor on the Sabbath, because God, having created heaven and earth in six days, rested on the seventh day; and since the Lord had delivered them from their servitude in Egypt, Ex. 20:11; Deut. 5:14, 15. The Sabbath was a day of rest and refreshment for man and beast, a day to be set apart and observed by the people as a Sabbath unto God, and therefore included a holy assemblage for worship. All servile labor was strictly forbidden: no fire might be lit, Ex. 35:3; the man gathering sticks was stoned, Num. 15:32-36; and trading was summarily stopped in the days of Nehemiah, Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22. The morning and evening sacrifices were doubled, Num. 28:9; and new

shewbread was substituted for the old, Lev. 24:5-8. In the time of the Maccabees the Chasidim disclaimed the right to defend themselves in time of war on the Sabbath. The rabbis built a hedge around the law and specified thirty-nine works that were forbidden on the Sabbath, among them being some works of mercy and of necessity. In connection with Ex. 16:19 they fixed a Sabbath's journey at 2,000 cubits, measured from the city wall, though in the city they allowed one to go anywhere. Under their influence the Sabbath gradually became a burden rather than a day of joyous rest. Ideally, however, it constituted a recognition of God's claim on the life of the people, was a blessing for the nation, and the type of a better rest in store for the children of God.

**b. The Feast of the New Moon and the Feast of Trumpets.** The Weekly Sabbath and the Feast of the New Moon are often linked together in Scripture. Towards the end of every month watchmen were placed on the heights round about Jerusalem to watch for the new moon and to report as soon as it was seen. If the report proved true, the judges appointed for the purpose (later the Sanhedrin) pronounced the word *meqqudash*, it is consecrated. That day was then reckoned as the first of the month, and signal fires announced the new moon to the Jews that were at a distance from Jerusalem. The custom of celebrating the new moon probably dates from the time before Moses, it being quite prevalent among Orientals generally. Additional sacrifices were offered on that day, Num. 28:11-14, trumpets were blown, Num. 10:10; Ps. 81:3, and ordinary labor was suspended, Amos 8:5. The feast was kept with joy and thanksgiving. This was especially the case on the first of the seventh month, more particularly designated as the Feast of Trumpets, when the trumpets were blown all day long in Jerusalem, the sacrifices were still more increased, sabbatic rest was enjoined, and there was a holy convocation. It was a feast of great rejoicing and marked the



beginning of the agricultural year, Lev. 23:24, 25; Num. 29:1-6.

**c. The Sabbatic Year.** In accordance with a divine injunction the soil of Palestine was to be left uncultivated every seventh year, Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:2-7, the year beginning in all probability with the new moon of the seventh month. Whatever grew of itself in that year was primarily for the poor; the owner might use some of its produce, but was not allowed to store or sell it, Lev. 25:6. Moreover it was unlawful to insist on the payment of a debt by an Israelite; and the Hebrew slaves had to be set free, if they desired it, Deut. 15:1-6. On the Feast of Tabernacles that fell in this year the law was to be read publicly to remind the people of the fact that their rest was to be spent in meditating on the Word of God. We find no historical traces of the Sabbatic Year before the exile, and the rabbins held that the seventy years of the captivity were to make up for their neglect in keeping it, cf. II Chron. 36:21. After the exile it was strictly observed by both Jews and Samaritans, Neh. 10:31; I Macc. 6:49, 53; Jos. Ant. XIII 8:1; XIV 10:6; XV 1:2; Wars I 2:4.

**d. The Year of Jubilee.** The Year of Jubilee had to be observed, according to the law, every fiftieth year, following therefore the seventh successive Sabbatic Year, Lev. 25:8-16, 23-35; 27:16-25; Num. 36. It too was a year of rest for the land, and all the Hebrews that were in servitude went free. Moreover all the property that had been alienated in the course of time returned to its original owners. It was the year of the restoration of all things. The feast began on the tenth of the month Tishri and was announced by the blast of the trumpet, a season of general rejoicing. There is some doubt as to whether the Year of Jubilee was ever observed, though a few references in the prophets seem to imply that it actually was observed, Is. 37:30; 61:1-3; Ezek. 46:17. All historical traces of it seem to be wanting. It had typical significance in that it pointed to "the accept-



able year of the Lord," to the restoration of all things in Jesus Christ.

---

#### 4. THE THREE GREAT FEASTS

a. **Their General Character.** Of the two Hebrew terms to denote a feast, *mo'ed* and *chag*, the former applied to all the feasts, including even the Sabbath, while the latter referred exclusively to the three great feasts. The term *mo'adim* (appointed meetings) marked the feasts as trystings of Jehovah with his people; and the term *chagim* (from a root meaning, to dance) pointed to the joyousness that was characteristic of the pilgrim-feasts. On the feasts to which this name applied all male Israelites were to appear before the Lord in his sanctuary. They were marked by many special offerings both private and public, that were brought with great joy before the Lord and were followed by a joyous meal. Each one of these feasts had one or more days on which sabbatic rest was enjoined together with a holy convocation.

b. **Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.** These two feasts are often regarded and mentioned as one in Scripture, and in their historic origin are linked inseparably together. Hence they may be regarded as constituting one of the great feasts, but for the sake of clearness it is well to distinguish them. Passover, the opening feast of the year, was kept on the fourteenth of Nisan in commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Ex. 12:1-14. But if on account of absence from home or by reason of ceremonial defilement an Israelite was not able to keep the Passover at the appointed time, he was obliged to celebrate it a month later, Num. 9:9-14. On the tenth of the month a male lamb of the first year was selected for one or more families, in later times for a party of not less than ten nor more than twenty. The lamb was killed between the two evenings of the four-

teenth, i. e. probably between three and six o'clock in the afternoon, after which it was roasted entire and eaten the same evening with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Whatever was left of the meal had to be burned the same night. At their departure from Egypt the Israelites had to eat it with their loins girded, their feet shod and staff in hand. Naturally some of the features of the first Passover never recurred, such as eating the meal prepared for a journey, and sprinkling the blood on the lintels of the door. The law enjoined that all males should go up to Jerusalem to eat the Passover, and that the blood should be sprinkled on the altar. In later times the celebration of the feast became far more elaborate. On the evening of the thirteenth of Nisan all leaven was carefully removed from the dwellings of the Israelites and unleavened cakes were baked, cf. I Cor. 5:7; and the regular evening sacrifice of the following day was brought an hour or (if it fell on a Friday) two hours earlier than usual, to allow sufficient time for killing the Passover lambs. At the appointed time these were slain in the court of the temple. The meal that followed was a festive one, wine being used quite freely. The following order was generally observed: (1) After the head of the house offered a prayer of thanksgiving, the first cup was emptied and the host washed his hands. (2) The bitter herbs, moistened in salt water, were then eaten, the dishes were removed and the second cup filled. (3) In reply to the question of his son, "why is this night distinguished from all other nights," the head of the house narrated or read the early history of Israel and the institution of the feast. (4) The first part of the Hallel (Ps. 113, 114) was sung, and the hands of all the guests were washed. (5) The lamb then carved and eaten, together with unleavened bread, and the third cup, called the cup of blessing, I Cor. 10:16, was emptied. (6) The meal continued, each one eating as much as he liked, but always last of the lamb. (7) A fourth cup followed, succeeded by the singing of the last part of the

Hallel (Ps. 115-118). Sometimes there was even a fifth cup. The Paschal lamb was in reality an expiatory sacrifice, partaking of the nature of both the later sin- and peace-offerings. Its blood was atoning blood and it pointed to Christ as our Passover, I Cor. 5:7. The bitter herbs symbolized the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage; and the unleavened bread was the emblem of purity, I Cor. 5:7, 8.

As already remarked, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was immediately linked to the Passover; in fact the lamb was eaten on the first day of the second feast. It was both a historical and an agricultural feast, being intimately related to the feast that preceded it, and at the same time representing the beginning of the grain harvest, Ex. 12:15-20; 13:3-10; Lev. 23:6 ff.; Num. 28:17; Deut. 16:8. The feast was celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of Nisan, and was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, since no other bread might be eaten during that period. A public sacrifice was daily brought, consisting of two bullocks, a ram and seven he-lambs of the first year, all without blemish, together with a meal-offering. Besides these many private offerings were made. The first day was a day of rest from all servile labor; and on the second day a sheaf of the newly grown barley, also called, "the Passover sheaf," was waved before the Lord in the sanctuary, signaling the opening of the harvest season. After this ceremony on the sixteenth of Nisan many of the pilgrims again returned to their homes.

**c. Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks.** This feast was also called, "the Feast of Harvest," and "the Day of First-fruits." Counting from the day on which the sheaf was waved, it followed exactly  $7 \times 7$  days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Hence the name Pentecost, Lev. 23:12-20; Num. 28:26-31. The presentation of the firstfruits gave this day its distinctive character. These were brought in the form of two wheaten loaves or cakes, made of  $\frac{2}{10}$  of an ephah of fine flour, and leavened like all the bread that was offered in connection with thank-offerings. The

accompanying sacrifice consisted of a young bullock, two rams and seven lambs of the first year, with the appropriate meat and drink-offerings, as a burnt-offering; a kid of the goats for a sin-offering; and two lambs of the first year as a peace-offering. Of these two lambs and of the wave-loaves one fell to the high priest, and the other to the priests officiating at the sanctuary, to be eaten within the sacred precincts. The Feast of Weeks typically pointed to the ingathering of the Church's firstfruits, Acts 2.

**d. The Feast of Tabernacles and its Octave.** The Feast of Tabernacles was the last of the Hebrew pilgrim feasts; and its Octave marked the end of the entire festive season. It was called, "the Feast of Tabernacles," since it served to remind the Israelites of the fact that they dwelt in booths in the desert; "the Feast of Ingathering," because it signalized the completion of the harvest; and on account of its importance it was also styled, "the Feast" and, "the Feast of Jehovah," Lev. 23: 33-44; I Kings 8: 2; II Chron. 5: 3; 7: 8, 9. It was celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the month Tishri. The element of joy was very pronounced in this feast, sabbatic rest being enjoined only on the first day. Its characteristic feature was that the people dwelt in booths throughout and round about Jerusalem from the first day to the last. The great number and variety of the sacrifices brought was also unique, Num. 29: 12-34. Besides the regular sacrifices each day had its special burnt- and sin-offering. The former consisted on the first day of thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, with their meat- and drink-offerings. On the following days the number of bullocks was reduced by one each succeeding day, while the number of rams and lambs remained the same. The daily sin-offering consisted of a kid of the goats. These sacrifices were brought to the accompaniment of music and singing. Historical references to the feast are found in Judg. 21: 19; I Kings 8: 2, 65; 9: 25; II Chron. 5: 3; 7: 8; 8: 13. After

the exile the people were even more scrupulous in keeping it than before.

The later Jews brought about some important changes in the celebration of this feast. There was a daily procession of the people, who carried a *lulav*, composed of myrtle and willow branches in the left, and a citron in the right hand. This practice was based on Lev. 23:40. An occasion of great joy was the ceremony of drawing and pouring water in the morning of each feast day. At the time of the morning sacrifice a festive procession, headed by a priest who bore a golden pitcher, started for the pool of Siloam to fetch water. He returned exactly at the time when the drink-offering, that accompanied the sacrifices, was made. In the forecourt of the temple he was hailed with trumpet blasts, while a second priest took the pitcher from his hands with the words of Is. 12:3, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation!" In the sight of all the people he then poured the water, together with the drink-offering, into a silver receptacle on the north-east corner of the altar, whence it was carried by a subterraneous channel into the Kedron valley. After this performance the temple music immediately resounded and the Levites and the people sang the Hallel responsively. The rabbis found in this ceremony a reference to the water that flowed out of the rock in the desert, or to the former rain, while Christ took occasion from it to point to himself as the fountain of living water, John 7:37-39. Another characteristic feature of the feast in Jesus' time was the special illumination of the court of women on the evening of the first day, while the people held a torchlight procession with music and dancing.

The Feast of Tabernacles was immediately followed by its Octave, a festal day that differed both in character and meaning from the preceding feast, Num. 29:35-38. The people no more dwelt in booths; no water was drawn from the pool of Siloam; neither were festive processions held. It was a day of sabbatic rest and of a holy convocation, on



which one bullock, one ram and seven lambs of the first year, together with their meat and drink-offerings, were brought as a burnt-offering; and a goat for a sin-offering. It was the closing day of the whole cycle of yearly feasts, probably "the great day of the feast," to which John 7:37 refers.

---

## 5. THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT

The Day of Atonement, often counted among the feasts of Israel, cannot, strictly speaking, be called a feast; it was rather a day of national humiliation, a day that made an annual remembrance of sin and restored the people ceremonially to that harmonious relation with God without which peace of conscience and heartfelt gratitude and joy were impossible. In contradistinction to the large number of Israel's joyous feasts it stood all by itself as the only day of fasting prescribed by the law. It was a day of sabbatic rest, on which the high priest only could officiate at the sanctuary, while the other priests acted as his assistants, Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:1-34; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11. In addition to the daily morning and evening sacrifices there were brought on this day special burnt-offerings, consisting of a ram in behalf of the priesthood, and a young bullock, a ram and seven lambs of the first year, with their appropriate meat-offerings, for the people; a kid of the goats for a sin-offering; and finally the most characteristic sacrifices of the day, the specific offerings of atonement: a young bullock for the priesthood and two goats for the people. Of these two goats the one was killed and the other sent into the wilderness. Together they formed a single sin-offering, the former atoning for sin by its blood and the latter symbolically bearing away the sin of the people. They were a striking type of Christ, who not only died for our sins, but also took them upon him and bore them away, so that they are no more remembered against us.



At the time of Christ the services of the Day of Atonement were established by rabbinical law. A week previous to the feast day the high priest took up his abode in the sanctuary, to prepare himself by daily practice for the elaborate ritual of the great day. The services began early in the morning, when the high priest, having washed hands and feet and clothed in his usual official garb, the golden vestments, brought the regular morning sacrifice. In the course of the day he had to bathe the whole body five times and wash his hands and feet ten times. After the ordinary morning offerings were brought, he laid aside his beautiful garments and clothed himself wholly in white for the performance of the peculiar expiatory rites of the day. Then placing his hands on the bullock's head, he confessed the sins of the house of Aaron; and after it was determined by lot which one of the goats was to be killed and which one sent away, he killed the bullock and caught its blood in a vessel. This being accomplished, he entered the Holy of Holies with a censer, containing live coals from the altar, in one hand and incense in the other. When he arrived in the inner sanctuary, he placed the incense on the coals and offered a brief prayer of supplication. During this whole transaction the people without stood silent and in an attitude of prayer. Returning shortly the high priest received from an attendant the vessel with blood, which meanwhile had been stirred continually, and re-entering the Holy of Holies, sprinkled it in the direction of the supposed mercy-seat (formerly, on the mercy-seat), once upward and seven times downward. Again leaving the Most Holy Place, he deposited the bowl of blood on a golden stand before the veil, and proceeded to kill the goat. With its blood he once more entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood, as before, towards the mercy-seat, subsequently placing the remainder on another stand before the veil. Then taking first the blood of the bullock and next that of the goat, he sprinkled both the veil and the altar of

incense. After this was done, he thoroughly mixed the blood of both animals, sprinkled with it the brazen altar, and poured the remainder out at its base. Then the high priest, placing his hands on the head of the other goat, confessed the sins of the people; after which he entrusted the goat to a man of the people, who led him away into the desert "for Azazel" (i. e., probably, for the evil spirit), thus bringing the symbol of the removal of sin into the very presence of the accuser of the people, in order to make him understand that his accusations had lost their foundation. In later times the goat was hurled from a rock, probably in the vicinity of Bethany, to make his return utterly impossible. While the goat was led away, the carcass of the sin-offering was removed outside of the city and burnt there; the high priest read the passages of the Pentateuch that referred to the feast; and the special burnt-offerings were brought. At the end of these all important services the high priest again laid aside his white raiment, and clad in his golden vestments, brought the regular evening sacrifice. The ceremonies of the Day of Atonement were full of rich spiritual significance.

---

## F. DEFLECTION AMONG ISRAEL

---

### 1. IMAGE WORSHIP

God created man in his own image. This image having been partly lost and partly obscured by sin, man now undertakes to make for himself an image of God. Hence the commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image . . . to bow down to them and serve them." Notwithstanding this we find several traces of image worship among Israel, i. e., of worshiping the true God by means of an image. In all probability the earliest examples of such images are the teraphim that are mentioned repeatedly in Scripture, e. g., Gen. 31:19, 34, 53; 35:2; Judg.

17:5; I Sam. 19:13, 14; Hos. 3:4; Ezek. 21:21; Zech. 10:2. The name is of uncertain derivation, and the plural may be a plural of majesty. Their form too is a matter of conjecture, though I Sam. 19:13, 14 seems to imply that they had the form of a man. At the same time a comparison of this passage with Gen. 31:34 clearly shows that their size varied considerably. They are sometimes spoken of as gods, Gen. 31:30; Judg. 17:5; 18:24, though we have no evidence that they were ever directly worshiped. And Laban, while he had these so-called gods, speaks of Jehovah as the God of his father Nahor in such a way that he also acknowledges him as God, Gen. 31:53. It seems therefore that they were regarded as a sort of intermediaries between God and man.

A second trace of image worship is found in the history of the golden calf at Mount Sinai, Ex. 32:1-6. The people undoubtedly regarded this image as, in some sense, a representation of Jehovah, for in connection with it they kept a feast to the Lord. But what led Israel to represent God under the image of a calf? Formerly it was quite customary to think specifically of Egyptian influences, seeing that both Israel and Jeroboam, who set up two calves after the division of the kingdom, I Kings 12:28, 29, had come from Egypt. It is more probable, however, that the origin of the bull symbolism is to be sought in the native tendency of Oriental peoples generally to regard the young bull as the natural emblem of strength and vital energy. The calf was what would be called a symbol rather than an image of God.

In all probability there was a third species of image worship in connection with the brazen serpent. This image was set up in the wilderness for the stricken Israelites, Num. 21:9, was long preserved among Israel and finally became a snare to them, II Kings 18:4. Therefore Hezekiah destroyed it and called it contemptuously Nehustan, i. e., a copper thing. Moreover from such passages as

II Kings 17:10; 18:4, we may infer that several other images were worshiped.

---

## 2. WORSHIP ON HIGH PLACES

A second form of illegal worship of God is found in Israel's worship on the high places of the land, cf. Deut. 12:2-6, 13 f. The Canaanites, like the gentile nations generally, were accustomed to worship on high places, since they regarded hills and mountains as special dwelling-places of the gods. But the law prescribed that Israel should have a central sanctuary and should not worship God on the so-called *bamoth*, since this would counteract the desired unity of worship, and might easily degenerate into the idolatry of the nations round about them. History teaches us, however, that Israel did not desist from it. This may have been due to a variety of influences, as f. i. (1) the practice of the patriarchs to offer sacrifices wherever God revealed himself to them; (2) the influence of the Canaanites that remained in the land; (3) the inconvenience of worshiping at Jerusalem for those living at a distance; and (4) the fact that in the disturbed and lawless condition of things in the time of the judges and in the northern kingdom even prophets and Levitical priests worshiped on such places. But whatever may be said in explanation of the fact, it was never sanctioned, but always condemned by the law and the prophets. The pious kings of Israel repeatedly suppressed this illegal worship. We must carefully distinguish the high places on which Jehovah was served from those on which the idols were worshiped.

---

## 3. IDOLATRY

We find no idolatry, strictly so called, in the families of the patriarchs, nor in the early life of Israel. After their settlement in the land, however, they repeatedly and persistently broke the first commandment, at first worshiping

Canaanitish, and afterwards also Assyrian and Babylonian gods. The principal idols worshiped by Israel in Canaan were the chief deities of the nations that inhabited the land, viz., the *Baalim* and the *Ashteroth*, Judg. 2:11, 13; 3:7; I Sam. 7:4; 12:10. *Baal* represented the powers of nature, especially of the sun. He was regarded not only as the generating and producing, but also as the preserving and as the destroying principle. The conception of this god differed in different times and in various places. *Baal* worship at its worst was seen in the service of the Phoenician *Melkart*. His cult was introduced in Israel in the time of Ahab, I Kings 16:31, 32; 18:19; but was vigorously opposed by Elijah and extirpated by Jehu. In later times the name *Baal* was often applied to idols in general, Jer. 2:8; 7:9; 11:13; 32:29; cf. 11:13. Some of the local conceptions of Baal in the Old Testament are *Baal-Berith*, Judg. 8:33; 9:4; *Beelzebub*, the lord of the flies, II Kings 1:2 ff; *Baal Peor*, probably named after Mount Peor, a god in whose service women prostituted themselves. He may have been identical with *Chemosh*, the war-god of the Moabites.

*Astarte* or *Asherah* was the female deity of the Canaanites. The name *Asherah* originally denoted a symbolical representation of the goddess, having the form of a tree trunk so shaped that it bore some resemblance to the human figure. She was especially the goddess of sexual passion, though in some localities she was regarded as the goddess of Venus or of the moon. Prostitution of both men and women was the most common sacrifice brought to her.

*Molech*, also called *Milcom*, I Kings 11:5, 33, and *Malcam*, Jer. 49:3; Zeph. 1:5, was the god of the children of Ammon. He was an aspect of Baal and, like Baal of Tyre, was worshiped with human sacrifices. Children were burnt to him in the fire. Solomon erected an altar for this abomination on what was hence called the Mount of Offense; and in succeeding centuries the children of Israel burnt children to this god in the valley of Hinnom, Ps.



106:38; Jer. 7:31; 19:4, 5; Ezek. 16:21; 23:37, 39. *Chemosh*, the god of the Moabites, Num. 21:29; Jer. 48:7; Moabite Stone 3, was possibly worshiped in the same way, II Kings 3:27, and may even have been identical with the Ammonite god, Judg. 11:24. *Dagon*, a Philistine deity, was a fish-god, represented as having the trunk of a fish, with a human head and human hands. He was worshiped especially at Gaza and Ashdod, Judg. 16:23 ff; I Sam. 5:1 ff., and was the symbol of all those vivifying natural powers that take effect in warm countries mainly through water. *Tammuz*, of whom Ezekiel speaks, is a god whose nature is veiled in obscurity, Ezek. 8:14. He was represented as dying annually before the summer solstice, and as returning to life again with each successive year. This seems to refer to the annual withdrawal and invariable return of the sun; and to the death and revival of vegetation.

Of the Babylonian gods the Bible mentions especially *Bel* (akin to Baal), the supreme deity of the Babylonians, Is. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; 51:44. This god is not to be identified with the original *Bel*, the patron god of Nippur, but was really *Marduk* (Merodach), the god of the city of Babylon, who was gradually invested with the prerogatives and even the name of *Bel*, Jer. 50:2. He was a sun-god. Scripture also speaks of *Nebo*, the patron god of Borsippa, Is. 46:1. He was pre-eminently "the scribe," writing on his tablets the fate of mankind, the patron god too of literature and of the priests, who were the literary people. When the Assyrians transplanted heathen colonists to the land of the ten tribes, these also introduced there the worship of heathen deities, viz. of *Anammelech*, *Adrammelech* and *Nergal*, II Kings 17:30 ff.

In the New Testament we read especially of Jupiter, Mercury and Diana, Acts 14:12; 19:23 ff. The first was the chief Olympian deity, the Zeus of the Greeks. Mythology represents him as at once the god of gods, the everlasting one, and yet as a god subject to ordinary human



passions. According to Ovid he was one of the gods that once visited Philemon and his wife Baucis in the neighborhood of Phrygia. Mercury was regarded as an incarnation of the divine intelligence, and as the spokesman of the gods, especially of Jupiter. Diana was the patron deity of Ephesus. Her original temple there, destroyed in B. C. 356, was one of the seven wonders of the world. Of a later temple diminutive models were made in the time of Paul. Diana was the goddess of the moon, but in some places was also regarded as the goddess of the chase and of terrestrial life generally, both vegetable and animal.

#### 4. MAGICAL ARTS, DIVINATION, ETC.

The practice of magic is also a species of idolatry and was strictly forbidden by the law, Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:9-14. Transgression in this respect was to be punished by death, since it was contrary to one of the fundamental laws of God's kingdom. There are different phases of this sin that were all more or less common among the Canaanites. *Divination* is a generic term including all the others. The root meaning of the word is to cut, to divide and hence, figuratively, to decide. *Sorcery* is also a more or less general term, meaning to mutter and, in an intensive form, to mutter charms, to practice magic. *Charming* is a related term, which means to tie knots, one of the most common devices of magicians. *Necromancy*, according to the Hebrew, refers to inquiries made of an ob or python. The word originally denoted a leather bottle, and then, the belly of a conjuror in whom the python was supposed to dwell. *Ventriloquism* was often employed by magicians of this sort. *Sooth-saying* is a term that applies especially to determining a thing from the falling of rods or from the entrails of victims, Hos. 4:12; Ezek. 21:21. All these superstitions are regarded as a class in Scripture and are condemned as such.

### III. IN THE POST-EXILIC CHURCH

#### 1. THE SYNAGOGUES

It is doubtful, whether the Old Testament contains any references to synagogues, though it is possible that Ps. 74:8 refers to them. They owed their origin to the desire of the Jews to familiarize themselves with the law, and probably arose immediately after the exile. In a comparatively short time they were erected in all the cities of the Jews in Palestine and throughout the diaspora. The synagogue was commonly a rectangular building, so constructed that on entering it the worshiper faced Jerusalem, and that the interior corresponded somewhat to the temple with its divisions. The part nearest the door represented the court and was a large space where the people stood or (in later times) sat during the services, men and women being separated by a partition. A little beyond the center of the synagogue rose the platform or *bima* on which the pulpit or lectern stood, from where the law and the prophets were read and the people were addressed, the reader standing and the preacher sitting down, cf. Luke 4:20. This *bima* represented the Holy Place, while the ark or chest that contained the sacred rolls, built near the rear wall and covered by a veil, corresponded to the Holy of Holies.

A board of elders managed the affairs of the synagogue; yet there were also special officers, such as (1) the ruler (or rulers) of the synagogue, who directed the worship by appointing or requesting some of those present to pray, read, speak, etc.; (2) one or more attendants (*chazan*), who brought the rolls to the reader and again replaced them in the sacred depository, inflicted the corporal punishment on persons sentenced by the authorities, taught the youth of the congregation, opened and closed the synagogue, etc.; (3) dispensers of alms; and (4) ten or more wealthy men of leisure, who represented the congregation at every service.

The order of the services in the synagogue was as follows: (1) Reciting the *Shema*, Deut. 6: 4-9; 11: 13-21; Num. 15: 37-41; (2) Prayer; (3) Reading the law; (4) Reading the prophets; (5) Discourse by anyone who desired to speak, Acts 13:15; and (6) the Benediction. The synagogues in the dispersion had great significance for the spread of Christianity, since Paul on his missionary journeys always resorted to them first, where he could reach both Jews and gentiles.

## 2. THE SCRIBES

The exile taught Israel respect for the law, and goes far to explain the rise of a third class of teachers among the Jews, alongside of the priests and the prophets,—a class of scribes, who made it their special object to study the law and to instruct the people in it. Ezra, the priest, is the first of these scribes of whom we read in Scripture, Ezra 7: 12. In the course of time they became very numerous, and their prominence is quite evident from the New Testament. As over against the priests they gradually began to represent the legalistic faction among the Jews. The greater number of the scribes undoubtedly belonged to the party of the Pharisees, but from such places as Mark 2: 16; Luke 5: 30; and Acts 23: 9 we may infer that some belonged to another party. They were greatly honored by the common people, who addressed them as *rabbi* (my lord), a form of address that later developed into a title, of which the intensive form, *rabban* or *rabbon*, was applied only to the most prominent ones among them. Our Saviour, however, stigmatized them as hypocrites and blind leaders of the blind, who imposed grievous burdens on the people, took part in persecuting God's servants, and had taken away the key of knowledge, Matt. 23. The special task of the scribes was: (1) to study, develop and explain the law with reference to all sorts of concrete cases; (2) to instruct the youth, especially in the

torah; and (3) to serve as lawyers and judges in judicial matters.

### 3. THE PARTIES AND SECTS

In the time of the Maccabees we find the Jews divided into two religious parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Moreover there was a sect known as the Essenes.

**a. The Pharisees.** The Pharisees developed out of the Chasidim (the pious ones), who in the Greek period tried to stem the tide of Hellenization. Their enemies afterwards derisively applied to them the epithet *Perushim* (the separated), while they preferred to speak of themselves as *Chaberim* (companions). They formed a rather exclusive fraternity, bound by two vows, viz., that of tithing, and that in regard to purification. They were the orthodox among the Jews and contended for a life of strict obedience to the law and in harmony with the precepts of the rabbis. As to doctrine they believed in foreordination and regarded it as perfectly consistent with the free will of man; in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; in the existence of spirits; and in future rewards and punishments. But however highly they were respected by the people for their piety, their religion gradually degenerated into the most ascetic and unspiritual externalism, and was as such condemned by our Lord.

**b. The Sadducees.** The second party probably derived its name from the high priest Zadok, who held office in the time of David and Solomon. The party was not as large as that of the Pharisees, and consisted primarily of the priestly aristocracy. In opposition to the Pharisees they limited their creed to the doctrines that are found in the sacred text itself. After the time of Alexander the Great the influence of the Greek religion made itself felt in their ranks and they became the rationalists of the Jews. In distinction from their legalistic brethren they denied the resur-

rection of the body, the existence of angels and spirits and the future retribution of Sheol, Acts 23:8, and contended earnestly for the freedom of the will. They were not in touch with the common people and hence their influence among them was rather insignificant.

**c. The Essenes.** The derivation of this name is lost in obscurity, just as the origin of the sect itself is shrouded in uncertainty. The Essenes were an order of men, numbering about 4,000, who devoted themselves to an ascetic life. Forming separate colonies to escape defilement, they dwelt on the shores of the Dead Sea and in some of the towns of Judea. On joining the order one had to pass through a double novitiate. They did not marry, but adopted children, lived in community of goods, devoted themselves to husbandry, and partook of common meals, to which they ascribed a sacramental character. Their doctrine may be described as a mixture of Phariseeism run mad and of Pythagorean philosophy. They worshiped the sun and sought the essence of redemption in an escape of the soul from the body.

#### 4. THE PROSELYTES

The New Testament repeatedly speaks of proselytes or converts to Judaism, Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43. The Pharisees especially were active in their attempts to make converts; according to the word of our Lord they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. Rabbinical writings distinguish two kinds of proselytes, viz., proselytes of righteousness and proselytes of the gate. The former by circumcision and baptism separated themselves from their gentile relatives and accepted Judaism in its entirety. Hence they were also admitted to all the privileges of the Jews. The latter, on the other hand, were not circumcised, but simply agreed to observe the seven precepts of Noah. They were "fearers of God," but did not have the ceremonial



standing of a Jew. Among them Paul made many of his first converts, Acts 13:43.

## 5. THE FEASTS

**a. The Feast of Purim.** This festival was instituted to celebrate the deliverance of the exiles in Persia from the massacre planned by Haman. The name is derived from the fact that the lot (*pur*) was cast to determine the day for the general slaughter. It was kept on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar, and was, as it still is, an occasion of great rejoicing. On the evening of the thirteenth, which is a fast day, the Jews assemble in their synagogues, where after the services the book of Esther is read. When the name of Haman is reached, the congregation shouts, "Let his name be blotted out!" The following days are spent in mirth and rejoicing, the wealthy giving presents to the poor.

**b. The Feast of the Dedication of the Temple.** After Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the house of God, it was cleansed, restored and rededicated by Judas Maccabeus in B. C. 165. An annual festival was instituted to commemorate this fact. The feast lasted eight days, beginning on the twenty-fifth of Chisleu. It was also called the Feast of Lights, because it was characterized especially by a grand illumination of the temple and of the private dwellings. Beginning in each house with one light or as many as there were members in the family, they would add just that many more on each succeeding day, so that if they had three on the first day, they would have six on the second, nine on the third etc. Moreover the Hallel was sung every day, and joyous processions passed daily through the streets of Jerusalem, cf. John 10:22.









DATE DUE

--	--	--

THE KING'S LIBRARY



3000075325

